

# Yellowwood and Environs

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# INTRODUCTION

Towering high and proud above the Du Toits' Kloof valley is the steep and imposing so called Yellowwood amphitheatre. It is part of the De Le Bat ridges. Some of the hardest and boldest trad routes in South Africa form a cicatrize over the grey and yellow rock. It is also home to an anomalous bolted route called Newborn (29) as well as some Euro hybrid routes but by and large, the amphitheatre is almost devoid of fixed gear and the odd piton or bolt are so old and worn as to be untrustworthy. The main wall stands some 270m tall at its highest point and climbing any of the routes ground up, on-sight in a day is very rarely achieved. Most attempts are met with failure for a variety of reasons to be detailed later.

The right side of the Amphitheatre is guarded by the knife edge **Smalblaar ridge 16**, a Mamacos masterpiece and one of the classic climbs in South Africa. Further west and around the corner of Smalblaar ridge are the **Chess pieces** that are home to excellent 4 to 6 pitch routes on good quality rock, including **"No More Bells" 19**.

To left of the main **Yellowwood Amphitheatre** are series of buttresses bordered on the left by the route **Lekker Time** and named known from left to right as **Timidity, Divine Time, Tea Time, Fine Time** and the **Fun Time buttresses**.

**Small Time Buttress** is easy to identify and approach as it is on the right (west side) of the ravine just right of the approach trail some 200m or so below the base of the main amphitheatre. The dihedral forming the route **Classic Corner** is unmistakable.

Further down the ravine on the left or east side is the **Sublime Buttress** that tops out more or less level with the base of **Lekker Time**. It is bordered on its left by the route **Red Waterfall Face**. On its left is a huge and impressive blank appearing lichen covered face (dubbed **Lichen Face**) that has yet to be properly explored and developed.

To the left is the unmistakable **Black Waterfall Face** route identifiable by the enduring black streaks on the rock. **Not the Best Time** climbs the grey ramp and skirts past the right of the huge overhang further right.

Over the last few years some other challenging modern routes nearby have been opened and are included in this guide. As at June 2017 **Righteous Condemnation, Zephyr, Twilight Years** and **Masquerade** are included.

The Ravine, Amphitheatre and most of the climbable rock is on the farm Gevonden 733 and is privately owned by the Dave Richter family trust. There is tacit permission to climb at Yellowwood by the beneficiaries of the trust provided we do not engage in any eco-unfriendly practises. Access from the road directly below crosses Erf 631.owned by Mr. Michael John T'Sas Rolfes. Again, no official permission has been obtained to access Yellowwood ravine environs as at June 2017.



**Satellite view of Yellowwood ravine and environs.**



The approach to Yellowwood Amphitheatre involves an 840m elevation hike starting at 360m above sea level to the base of the main amphitheatre that is at 1,200m. The main wall then continues vertically top out at just below 1,500m above sea level. The water point at the base of the **Divine Time Buttress** is about 100m lower than the centre of the base of the main amphitheatre.

The hike to the base of the main wall usually takes the average party 90 minutes to 2 hours to ascend depending on their level of fitness and weight carried. (Approach to the **Divine Time Buttress** saves about 5 minutes.)

My love affair with Yellowwood amphitheatre started in the late nineteen eighties after I had moved to Cape Town from Johannesburg when, with Tony Dick, I climbed "**Armageddon Time**" and on-sighted the crux pitch. I also climbed "**Blood is Sweeter than Honey**" soon after that. I found both routes to be very bold and scary and hard for their grades. In fact, Tony and I did not complete the final pitch of **Blood is Sweeter than Honey** as he thought the second last pitch that he led was way scary.

Small children kept me busy and besides two visits with Brits on the first BMC/MCSA exchange in 2002 when I climbed the first of the "**Armageddon Direct**" (26) pitches with Dave Birkett, I paid little interest until 2007. Leo Rust and Tony had just completed the first free ascent of "**Prime Time**" that again validated the reputation of the committing and serious nature of the climbing on the main amphitheatre. So, with Anthony Hall I went to check it out. We got to just below the crux pitch of the route and it took me a further two attempts to climb it free to the top.

It was clear that the main amphitheatre was hard and complicated and very bold to climb and I was intimidated by it no less than other climbers. Nevertheless, I felt that it deserved its reputation as a hard-core trad climbing destination and it would bide its time until a new era of bold strong climbers would come along to tick new routes.

"**Newborn**", the anomalous sport climb was finally established in 2007 and occasionally climbed, but further development of trad routes stalled.

Foreign climbers came along and started interfering with the character of the trad nature of the amphitheatre by placing unnecessary bolts. This prompted me into action and "**Fun Time**" was created in 2009. There was a further flurry of activity on the main amphitheatre with the development by Hilton Davies and friends of "**Judgment Day**" and by Robert Zipplies and Johann Lanz of "**African Time**". Many first ascents on the Chess Pieces were also done around 2010.

In 2008 I climbed "**Prime Time**" again with Ged Desforges a visiting Brit and fashioned, on trad gear, the upper half of the **Down Time** Abseil route. Ged later wrote this about **Prime Time**.

*"However, the trad you boys have got is certainly something to be considered carefully. My screensaver at work, and picture on my fridge is of my foot, below which can be seen a notorious Cape Town orthopaedic surgeon abseiling down, with much of the yellowwood amphitheatre beneath him. In between me and him are several bits of gear, put in place to keep him in contact with the rock. I doubt there'd be much bouncing if the anchor ripped. Above me is a solitary rock 6. This was one of the most memorable moments of my year/life. Luckily, I managed to take a snap to etch it in my mind. In the distance the sun was setting, and half an hour later we'd be abbing down the lower half of the wall in pitch black. This was the end of one of the most memorable days climbing I've ever had.*

*The pitch with the crucial offset blue alien was fun, and the steep finger crack was great until i got cramp in my arms and nearly peeled off. But the crux pitch! Now I'm not one for foul language, but fuck me. That was something. I just couldn't make myself make the moves onto the detached, booming pillar. I hung on the belay, trying to force myself to do it, knowing how much Snort wanted to get up this route. He'd done that pitch, and once I'd committed he coaxed me up to the roof, warning me to save the green alien for*

*higher up. Fuck that, the first decent break and I stuffed in every cam I could find to put some emotional distance between me and that pillar. The pinchy, pumpy, crumbly stuff above that was the stuff dreams are made of, especially when you're staring a perfect green alien slot in the eyes, wishing you'd saved it. That belay was a nice one. Stumbling down to the road at midnight, after 14 hours on the go, a long way from Cape Town, and an even longer way from Sheffield, tired, hungry, thirsty, bleeding; I couldn't have been happier.*

*Point is you lot have got some of the finest adventure climbing imaginable. Don't waste it. I'll be back soon, so keep your filthy mits off that crack line we abbed down.*

A little later in April 2008, Robert Breyer and I carried up a drill via **Smalblaar** to bolt it with the idea that it would make a route, a project that I am still working on with James Smith almost 10 years on.

Work started on **Fantastic Time** in 2010 and **Show Time** in 2011. Both routes required a long time to finesse and free climb.

Around that time, I cast my eye to **East Buttresses** but other than the yellow-orange-red panels on **Tea Time** and **Divine Time** Buttresses it all seemed a bit dodgy. With Jonathan Hajos and Ilya Kohl we did do **Tea Time 24** that was OK but hardly inspiring as a shorter route compared to the routes far around the corner on the Chess Pieces.

I stayed intrigued though especially with the upside-down triangular “headwall” where **Timerity** and **Another Fckn Time** now goes. But my yellowwood experience suggested that this would be bold, blanc, super hard and scary climbing. I was found to be wrong some time later.

With Dion van Zyl I ventured on to the next buttress and one of the finest routes at the grade I have ever climbed, **Divine Time 19** was born. We also found a [water source](#) that allows for the catchment and storage of water for up to 9 months of the year.

It was then a treasure trove of trad climbing was revealed to me and “since that time” a host of ground up routes have been created with relative ease, not only on the **Divine** and **Tea Time** Buttresses but all over the rock buttresses left of the main amphitheatre and further down on the left where now resides the **Sublime Time** routes. If you care to read the names of climbers that partnered me on the first ascents it reads like a list of who's who in the trad climbing community of the Western Cape

Despite several projects on the go by Willem Le Roux and I, James Smith and I and Tini Versfeld and friends, the main amphitheatre has thwarted the development of a new route since around 2012 and it remains to be seen whether **Down Time** will morph into **Up Time**.

Yellowwood, like Blouberg in the preceding years, has fascinated, engaged and enchanted me for the last 10 years or so. It has kept me interested, intrigued, fit, safe, (so far), and relatively bold. It allows for wonderful testing adventure climbing and the routes that I have crafted there I can share with just about anyone with any climbing ability. I can guarantee you that if you enjoy steep, airy exposed climbing on trad you will come home exhilarated and tired even if you climb one of the easiest routes like “Lekker Time”.

There is nothing quite like it anywhere in the world: bold, technical steep, airy climbing an hour's drive from one of the great modern cities of the world and 90 minutes' walk. There is nary a bolt on the vast majority of the routes and (almost) no other people or chalked holds to be seen.

What is so compelling about climbing at Yellowwood is the human experience I have enjoyed with so many friends over the years. A few years ago, Neels Havenga declared that he was my new best friend and from this has evolved the tongue-in-cheek acronym NBF as it pertains to anyone who climbs with me at Yellowwood. To this end I must have climbed with a whole bunch of different people at Yellowwood and so many have become OBFs or Old Best Friends. There is

no better way than to get to know people than on a route at Yellowwood where there is time to chat on the hike (even though I do most of the pontificating) and there is always a hot cup of tea at the base before and after a route to wash down the staple Eet-sum-mor biscuits.

I have lost count of how many different people I have shared a rope or ropes with and the list includes just about everyone that trad climbs in the cape and many that do not. Besides all my OBF's and especially Margaret my wife, some of my NBF's that have accompanied me up there include both my sons Nick and Dunc, some rather posh ladies (dare I call them that) from Constantia who walked up just to have tea, one leopard and many many others. I cannot remember having a bad experience there.

NBF's are invariably entertained by me on the hike up and are subjected to some diatribe or other, fondly designated TWATS (The World According To Snort) by an OBF, Hugh Willis. I have also been called the POG, (Pontificating Old Goat) by Stewart Middlemiss another OBF who lives in the USA. Be that as it may, all my NBF's become OBF's even though some would not care to admit it.

A favourite NBF victim would be visiting Brit trad climber and just recently I sojourned up there with Jamey Barker and did the first ascent of **Adventure Time 21**. What a way to seal a friendship bond that will endure for ever even if only through the words in a guide book. I mean, how cool is that. Darn site better than getting smashed in a pub with your mates on a rainy day although a beer or two at Du Toit's Lodge is always called for after a route.

Crafting these adventurous routes of all grades to share with NBF's has been my pleasure and my joy and a legacy I am rather proud about. But I am not done yet and hopefully there is "Plenty of Time", "Hoards of Time" and "Lots of Time" before "Time's Up" and I am "Out of Time".

## TATS: Trad according to Snort at Yellowwood

The Caveats:

1. **"Ad idem"** with your partner.
2. Preparation
3. Gear
4. Communication
5. Efficiency
6. Belaying techniques
7. Gear placing techniques
8. Safety tips
9. Sport vs trad
10. ESCAPING OFF ROUTES: FUN and UNFUN ABSEILING.

### **1. Ad idem with your partner. The NBF**

Climbing is a human experience. Neels Havenga, aka Dark Horse alluded to the concept of the new best friend NBF and I discovered that every time you go climbing it must be with your new best friend. If you do this you will be safe and have a great time. In this regard, your choice of climb must match both your and your partner's expectations in terms of your abilities and desires. The advantage of many years of experience is that I can climb with just about anyone with any capability and have a real good day out at Yellowwood. So, I can go do a route with Jimbo Smith or Clinton Martinengo and hang around while they might work a new grade 30 pitch high up on Yellowwood amphitheatre or go and climb Yellowwood crack grade 15 or so with two of my oldest best friends Margaret my wife and Hugh Willis.

So, the most important factor of trad climbing, particularly at Yellowwood is to choose the correct route that fits the expectations of you and your NBF.

## 2. Preparation.

Weather, water, approach, route description, descent and escape are the main issues. The correct gear is also important.

Weather is self-explanatory but bear in mind that weather in the mountains is unpredictable a lot of the time. In South Africa light, reflective colours are not very sexy and photogenic but long sleeve sun shirts and loose fitting pants are best for our sunny weather. Sun screen is an imperative.

Approach shoes are important in terms of weight and sturdiness and you must even choose your climbing shoes carefully depending on the weather. Hot weather requires looser fitting shoes as your feet will swell and hurt after a few pitches. Carrying up a pair of light weight “Crocs” or cheaper knock-offs is advised,

All these aspects are best discussed with someone who knows the routes well and your safety and chance of success is highly dependent on good preparation and local knowledge..

One of the best ways to embark on climbing routes at YW is to climb with an experienced and efficient climber. Second best is to pick his/her brains for beta and to carefully scrutinize the route descriptions that will be found on climbing blogs and websites or in this book.

There is also the hard core way of familiarizing yourself with the terrain as exemplified this weekend by my NBF Teodor Iliev. Having never been there before he embarked on his adventure walked up on Friday night, the 23 June 2017 starting around 9pm. Lacking local knowledge he started up the which is the approach to the routes to Du Toit’s Peak. After bush-whacking through dense fynbos till 1 am he bivvied somewhere along the “Klip rivier”. Using the whatsapp location pin, we found each other in Cyberspace. Johann Lanz and I were on a mission to climb one of the easier routes on the Chess Pieces and in so doing get high resolution photos for this guide. Teodor found his way back to the road and carrying food, bivvy gear, and a rack and two ropes eventually found his way to the **Snotter Camp** and eventually came round the Smalblaar ridge to find us at 2pm when we were well on our way up **Checkerboard**, a route on the right turret of **The Castle**. We eventually finished the route and fashioned a very user friendly abseil route to join him at the base. Teodor staid over alone on the Saturday night alone! Hoping that some other mates would join him for a route the next day. This did not materialize and so tomorrow the 27<sup>th</sup> we shall head up there again!.

High resolution digital photo-topos have made route finding so much easier. So make sure you have a large screen smart phone with decent battery life loaded with the info and photos.

Take the correct amount of water. Too much and too little slows you down. You never need to carry water for a three-pitch route unless you are very slow and climbing in the sun which would be stupid. Depending on the weather forecast and time of year, main amphitheatre routes at Yellowwood that are sun-bathed before mid-day require at least 1.5 litres per person. All the shorter routes if they are within your comfort grade can be done with less water as they are in the shade longer.

If the ambient temperature is cold, a trick a learned over the last few years is to fill collapsible or 500ml or 350ml plastic cold-drink or Nalgene bottles with very hot or even boiling water. Very hot water may result in the bottle contracting and also cause them to leak. Avoid filling them completely so as to avoid distorting the neck of the bottle. Make two of these as “hand-warmers” per person and climb with them in your pockets. You then also have warm water to drink. Hot tea or even hot “Game” (an isotonic powder drink available in South Africa) can be used to fill the bottles.

I find snacks important on any route at Yellowwood other than the one pitch routes at “**Small Time Crag.**” Many climbers prefer expensive energy bars, nuts and dried fruit. Other than biltong (dried meat) I do not see the point of taking dehydrated food up a route if one has to carry water in any case. My preferences are in order: wine gums that I keep in a pocket to eat on demand, nougat, (preferably Wedgewood that is not as sugary as other brands), sweet chocolate if not too hot, salty potato crisps for a long hard routes and biltong or droe wors. For full day routes some solid food like a sandwich and possibly a fruit is also nice to have.

Approach and descent: Make sure you know where you are going. Take physical and mental photos while approaching the crag so as to have a reference if it gets late and dark. Make mental notes about distances.

### 3. **Gear:**

Most inexperienced people carry far too much gear for fear of running out. The stuff is heavy and cumbersome and will slow you down.

Check the route description (RD) and see what gear you need. A good RD will inform you if you need doubles of anything or special pieces.

If you are worried about gear then learn to back clean as you get higher. Not close to the ground though

The question of what gear is best frequently arises on climbing forums. The answer is not really which brand or type, but rather the one that you and your partner have experience in.

To this end and when it comes to trad gear, I have literally used just about every device made in the last 42 years. I am not brand sensitive and have about 5 racks with a mix of Black Diamond, Metolius, Trango, DMM, Wild Country Mammut, Camp, Rock Empire Fixe etc. Familiarize yourself with all types of gear so that you can climb a route with whatever is available.

Some cams work better than others in specific settings. Aliens definitely **seem** better than other cams in horizontal placements and Black Diamond tricams fit in narrower widths but are expensive and stiff.

Double axle cams are heavier than non, but can be used as nuts and have an increased range and thereby are more versatile.

Single wire Wild Country nuts are light but are less stiff for high placements and also the lack of stiffness makes it a little more difficult to yank out. As doubles they are light provide and their shapes allow for more placement options.

Hexes are actually now superfluous and in any case very few people know how to cam them into cracks. They are relatively light as a leaver piece or as an additional large passive piece of gear.

#### **A standard rack includes:**

A set of RP's or micro nuts on 1 biner.

A set of nuts BD, WC or Wallnuts to size 10 on 2 biners. If carrying doubles have a different brand or WC single wire nuts

A full set of cams: Aliens, Metolius BD to Camelot 3 size one on each biner.

4 draws and 8 extendable quickdraws made with 60cm slings or 12 extendable quickdraws with a biner each side. (If multipitch climbing replace or add 1 or 2 dyneema slings with 7mm rope slings as leaver slings.)

1 120cm sling

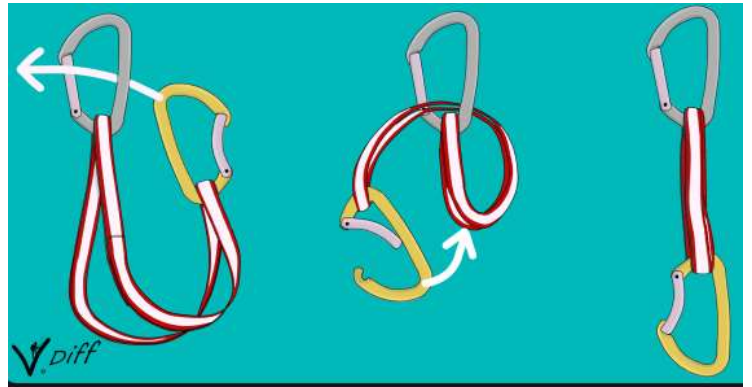
1 nut pick **each** with emergency tape on it.

1 belay device on a locking biner

1 spare screw gate! **Only 1.**

1 prussic chord 6 or 7mm

Chalk bag tied on with 6 or 7 mm chord.



**ROPES:** Use the thinnest lightest ropes you can tolerate. 50m is good for 99.99% of routes. Ropes don't break, ever! They cut! So, thicker ropes are not an imperative with regards to breakage. 2 ropes separated when you climb reduces the risk of cutting. There is no record of 2 ropes breaking. The recommended ropes for Yellowwood is Mammut Twilight ropes. Blue Water Ice-floss ropes are about 64m long and work well on **Down Time**.

**Single ropes:** are not recommended at Yellowwood and if you choose to climb with one then take at least 2 extra 60cm and 1 extra 120cm sling. Also consider making shorter pitches.

1l. Water bottle that can be attached to harness with frozen game with a leaver biner.

Packable Fleece or down jacket. Wind Jacket/shell.

Light descent shoes. Crocs

Buff.

Helmet. Solid plastic if route is on dodgy rock.

Cape, knife, head torch, bivvy bag on light weight accessory biners.

Make shorter pitches that are less tiring, warmer, and allow for better communication.

If you double up on gear then take extra small cams to one inch as they are light.

### **What is the best way to rack your gear:**

What you are used to is best. If you are learning to trad climb do it my way by distributing the rack all around you on a bandolier and your harness loops. The critical pieces are on the bandolier and are accessible to both your hands. A bandolier also allows you to leave the rack behind if you do a crank or two at your limit and then you can haul it up afterwards.

Slings, micro-nuts, heavy cams, water and accessories (jacket, knife etc), on your harness.

Nuts and cams to one or two inch on a bandolier that is full strength and can double as a sling.





#### 4. Communication:

Is there cell phone connection? Make sure you both have a smart phone that also has a torch function.

If it is windy make shorter pitches.

3 sharp yanks on the rope is off-belay, 2 sharp yanks: climb-when-ready.

#### 5. Efficiency:

The only way to learn efficiency is to do multi-pitch routes with experienced climbers. If you do a 10 pitch climb and you lose just 5 to 10 minutes per pitch you will lose almost 2 hours in a day. That means 2 hours longer to be in the sun or in the freezing cold. It adds to the tedium and can frazzle nerves.

Some tips:

As you approach a stance place a really good piece if one is obvious as the stance may not be easy to secure. That means that even if your stance is suboptimal there is a good piece between you and oblivion.

Once on the stance say off-belay as soon as you find **one good anchor** unless it is a hanging stance when two is better. If you are on a flat ledge one good piece equalized to your harness using one rope with a clove-hitch and your butt firmly planted on the ground is pretty bomb proof. After finding another piece use the second rope to equalize to your harness. Using slings or chord wastes time and uses up gear and causes a clutter-fuck.

If you are three-up then make sure that you are in a position to untie one of the ropes from your harness to hand over to one of your party and equalize the second anchor using a length of either rope to your harness using the leaver biner and a clove hitch.

If the route is not overhanging and you are with competent climbers that will climb quickly it is best to belay off your harness with or without a pulley. Using belay devices in guide mode usually requires that you stand rather than sit and has a host of potential problems. You can very easily set up a locking system using a reverso or similar device so you can escape the system if needed.

If you are to continue leading the next pitch pile the rope carefully at your feet so you can flip it over and make sure the rope ends to you escape under the pile together.

While your buddies are climbing rack all the gear onto the bandolier or sling to hand over as the next leader arrives. Do not hand single pieces of gear to the next leader. It is inefficient and results in dropsy.

If you have followed and cleaned the pitch and are to take over the lead, the previous leader should tie you off by making a knot on the belay side of the rope. This is all that is needed if you are on a big ledge. You do not need to clip into the stance with a sling unless it is hanging and then the belayer must be ready to tie you off with a clove hitch on the rope, not a sling – it wastes time and clutters.

While you rack up the previous leader feeds you a snack and water and sorts out the slings and nuts that you cleaned. The previous leader can also consider the RD and other factors like sun cream and the like.

## **6. Techniques of belaying**

Learn to use an Edelrid Joule.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAHHgN5BdG4>

If using standard belay devices so as a BD ATC, never let go the rope and wrap it round your arm.

Feed out the rope in advance of the climber clipping the gear and lock down. If the climber falls off as they are trying to clip and you are feeding out the rope your natural instinct is to grab the rope on the sharp end that you are feeding out and you will get a rope burn and even let go the rope with your other hand. The Edelrid Jules are safer in this situation than any other device I have ever used including a grigri.

Once above deck fall range do not ratchet the rope. Keep a nice loop of slack in the system. Ratcheting destroys confidence in your partner and will result in an EBF (ex best friend) soon.

Consider where your leader is going and advise on extensions and directionals.

Belay prism specs are useful.

Stand up and even scramble up after the climber if a deck fall is imminent and be ready to take in the rope.

## **7. Techniques of placing gear:**

**Understand the following concepts:**

1. Fall factor
2. Upwards and other directional placements.
3. <http://www.climbing.com/skills/learn-this-how-to-use-directionals/>

<http://www.climbing.co.za/2012/02/ping-ping-ping-thud/>



4. Opposing pieces  
<http://www.climbing.com/skills/nuts-101/>
5. Threaded nuts.
6. Drag: The first piece never causes much drag. Always use long slings if there are overlaps or the pitch wanders.
7. 2 pieces between you and a deck fall
8. Small cam triggers must be reachable.
9. Cams walk and if a crack or rail is flared with it being wider deeper in, the cam can fall uselessly into the back of the crack or rail.
10. Cams can be moved "walked" up a crack as you climb allowing a comforting top rope situation. The cam is not disconnected from the rope which improves efficiency. If you do this make sure that you are not left without protection at all below you
11. Cams like nuts must be placed in the line of force in vertical cracks.

Wrong



Correct



12. Protecting traverses and overhangs and dihedrals. Try place a piece at or just over the lip of an overhang. Your next point must be well above the lip to avoid you breaking your lower leg (tibia) by striking the lip with your shin if you fall. In dihedrals (corners) try find placements out of the corner on the sides. Traverses require both ropes clipped if 2 people are following but use separate biners with one being longer than the other with an extender. Protect tricky moves before and afterwards.
13. Knots as pro:

<http://www.rockandice.com/video-gallery/czech-trad-ethics-knots-for-protection.>

<https://elllocesaqui.wordpress.com/2011/08/01/no-nuts-climb-with-knots/>



14. Equalizing points using the rope.

## 8. **Safety tips:**

Learn from an experienced climber but be analytical. A lot of older experienced climbers learned to climb on the basis that the leader does not fall. They can be quite slack about their safety. Having said that, considering they have climbed for many years without being killed they are probably OK.

Climb at or close to your sport grade ideally 20 and above. You are climbing with the wrong mind-set or with people that are too conservative or not bold enough if can climb 23 sport but only leading 17 or 18 on trad. Easy trad is very dangerous for the inexperienced climber and even for experienced climbers as the ground is usually not very steep. Experienced climbers tend to run it out on easier climbing which in my case resulted in the only injury I have ever sustained in a fall other than a rope burn. This was when a hold broke on a grade 16 climb after 42 years.



## 9. **Knots for trad:**

<http://www.climbingtechniques.org/knots-for-trad.html>

- European death knot
- Figure of 8
- Prussic
- Klemheist



- Munter hitch. For belaying and abseiling and the auto-locking munter



## Munter Magic

CAROLINE GEORGE · JUN 15, 2012

179  
SHARES



- Bow line
- Mule knot or hitch knots
- Overhand knots

### 10. **Sport vs Trad techniques:**

All climbing has similarities but trad does have fundamental differences. It has more dimensions and placing safe protection is inherent in the climbing procedure compared to fast clipping a bolt.

Bolted routes depend on judicious placement of a bolt that allows for momentary release of one hand gripping the rock and clipping of usually a single rope on mostly overhanging rock.

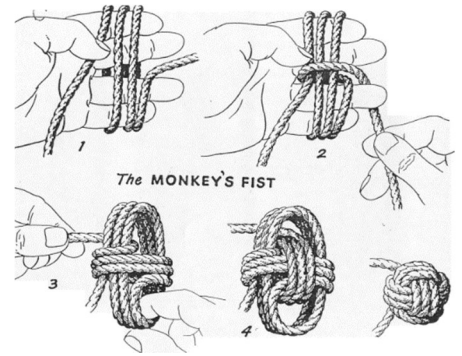
Trad climbing requires judicious planning of gear placements before even starting a pitch and if the belay ledge allows for it one can inspect the placements from below before setting off. Multiple pitch climbing at YW mandates that you always clip your rope through the highest point of the belay unless of course it is not very secure. This prevents a fall factor 2.

Your body positioning in trad climbing to place gear while holding on with one hand to do so is different to sport climbing. You also have a rack to carry up. You may have to perform a whole sequence of tricky moves to place a piece of gear in a crack that is not where you are actually going to climb the next section. You need to consider how this will affect the second that follows.

Techniques of trad climbing include:

- Walking a cam up with you if a crack maintains its width for several metres or leap frogging cams.
- You may need to lasso a spike with a sling above you and on a route called "Another Fuckn Time at Yellowwood a loop of rope is used to lasso a bollard a good 4m up from an undercut ledge.
- Occasionally some cunning chock stones have to be found and jammed into cracks and slung.

- Knotted rope can be used to fit into tapers when you do not have the correct size nut left over. (Hence another reason that you would carry a rope sling). Use a simple overhand knot = European death knot. Or a monkey's fist:
- I have hand tape wound around my nut pick to amongst other things tape mantle abrasions of the rope, but also to tape on a nut to the nut pick so that I can reach higher to place it.
- On occasion one needs to cross over depending on your balance and use your left hand to place a piece to the right of your right hand.
- Sometimes you have to forfeit an obviously good placement because it will use up a finger lock.
- You sometimes need to place a cam or a nut higher or lower than you would want so as not to interfere with a hand hold, finger lock or foot hold
- Bear in mind that large cams are generally less needed than small cams. Gold and Blue Camelots are hand jamb size and this allows for you to be relatively composed.
- We all have a natural inclination to put gear above us to effect a top rope at least for a move or two. This can result in problems as the gear and the rope can interfere with the moves. You sometimes have to re-consider this option, do the move and then reach down to place the gear after you have done the move if there is no good piece above you. The overhanging jamb crack on ***Fantastic Time*** is a good example of this.
- Harder climbing on trad all too often creates the dilemma of doing the move or placing the gear. The grading of the pitch, particularly on adventurous "remote" cliffs, must take this factor into consideration into the grading. So, although the red-point grade of many of the Yellowwood Amphitheatre pitches are only considered to be say 24, the **route grade is say 25 or even 26**. The grade will also depend on the amount of beta you publish. For example, the second pitch of Prime Time Direct is really only grade 24 if it were a single pitch on TM. However, it is bold and requires the placement of 2 tiny cams at the first crux and then there is another tiny not obvious RP placement a metre or two higher that is "nice-to-have" but very pumpy to place. Without this knowledge, the on-sight grade is solid 25 or 26. Later on the pitch there is another steep crux but in this instance the gear is easy to place but the climbing is hard. This pitch has only received one on-sight but some really good climbers have failed on it.



## 11. ESCAPING OFF ROUTES: FUN and UNFUN ABSEILING.

You never going to have fun climbing if you do not have the odd epic. Screamer falls, pulled gear, lost in the dark, freezing cold, dehydration, and so on. You just don't want it to be worse than that though.

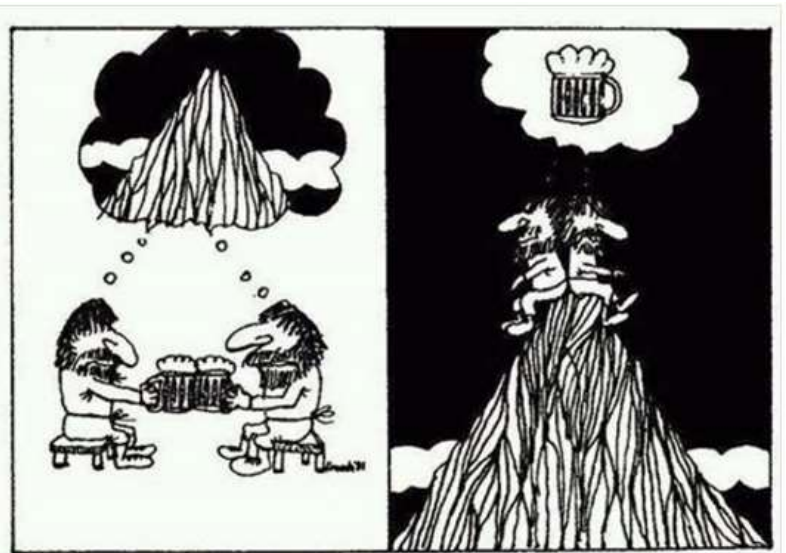
So, you have to aim to be adventurous and bold and optimistic. You also have to keep calm and keep your cool at all times. Climbing can seriously stress relationships so if things hot up take 5 or



even 10 minutes to sit down, have a snack, sip some water. Start some inane chatter like the cold beer you anticipate.

Comment on the view. Discuss something interesting that happened on the way up. Then weigh up your options. If your partner appears to be wobbling and wasting time then as gently and diplomatically as possible take over proceedings. Alternatively consider bailing but this is often worse.

To prevent serious epics make yourself familiar with setting up escape anchors. This requires awareness and anticipation every step of the way as you climb the route. Even very experienced climbers have had major epics at Yellowwood.



Consider the fact that you have two ropes with you. If they are 50m long then you can escape from a route that is 100m long by tying them together if necessary. That is often as much as 4 pitches. But it does mean you lose your ropes. If you leave your ropes to come back another time, make sure that you tie the end of the rope down tight so as to avoid it being damaged or lost by being blown around by the wind.

As you climb or belay on the way up consider the terrain around you with regard to potential lower-offs such as spikes and threads and bomber nut placements. Steep routes are generally much easier to get off from unless they are very over-hanging but even then directionals under the overhangs can and must be placed.

Most epic escape anchors are over engineered. A bomber nut or thread is just that. Get used to it. You do not need two points. If your NBF wants more than one piece send him or her first but this could be problematic if he she is inexperienced with regard to finding the next point. So, use your judgement as it is probably your gear that is being sacrificed.

Try and find an anchor that is at waist height or higher as this makes starting the abseil easier and therefore quicker. Use your rope slings with or without the lever biner depending on what degree of friction you may incur as you abseil down.

Smooth bollards sometimes work by merely putting the rope around them. Long abseils or overhanging abseils may result in too much friction so be careful.

Place the nut or thread with a back-up for the first person down. Make sure that the back-up is not equalized to the main point and just a back-up. First person down must stress the point as much as possible and take the full rack and slings. If there is any question as to its strength, then the first person down can place a few pieces of gear on the descent and clip one or both ropes through the pieces and tie off the rope at the next stance or stay tied to the rope. That means that if the top piece fails you may take a longish fall but at least not fall all the way off the climb.

Use a simple over hand knot (flat overhand bend or European death knot) to tie the ropes together. Make sure that the knot is properly dressed or shaped and pull each of the 4 strands coming from the knot as tight as possible. Do



not make a back-up knot. Do not leave tails longer than 15 -20cm. Do not use a Fig 8 flat knot which is less safe.

Once you in abseil mode make sure you and your partner each have a correctly made PAS (personal anchor system) with a 60cm sling girth hitched to you harness with your belay device on one locking biner and your spare screw gate attached to an extension to it by using a quick draw or doubled or tripled sling. You then have two options to connect to the anchors, a shorter and longer option.



Once the ropes are hanging down connect your prussic to the rope and attach it to your harness belay loop with a biner or to a leg loop.

You can use a locking biner but not essential as the prussic is merely a secondary system to your abseil device. 2 opposing biners serve as a locking system too. Pull up the ropes about 30cm and take the weight off by sliding the prussic down and allowing it to bite.



Then attach your belay device attached to the shorter option of your PAS to the rope above the prussic.

Once ready to abseil disconnect the longer option and clip that biner above your abseil device to the rope you will need to pull down. If you are in a hanging belay or even when not it is always safer to tension or weight your PAS.

**If it is very windy lower the first person down using the main abseil anchor as a pulley.**

Another option to get the rope to go where you want it to go and especially if the abseil is very steep is to weight the rope. You can even tie a rock on the very end with a simple knot that can loosen easily but this is not an option if there are climbers or other people below you.

In uncertain terrain and if windy do not put knots in the rope. Use a prussic that you have practised many times and that works 100%. If the abseil ends close to the end of the rope then as you get near the end, let the prussic bite, pull up the ends and tie knots separately.

If you do not trust your prussic you can coil the ropes round your thigh two or three times to lock it.

Knots are dangerous as the rope may twist as you abseil and cause a major problem over the length of the rope. If you want to tie knots then tie a knot in each rope separately.

Knots can also catch in cracks and constrictions if wind blows them to the side.

An option to prevent abseiling of the end of the rope in wind is to tie off the ropes for the first person down and tie a knot only on the rope that you are going to pull down. That halves your risk of a knot catching.

A final option is to coil the rope around your neck and as you abseil uncoil the rope as needed.

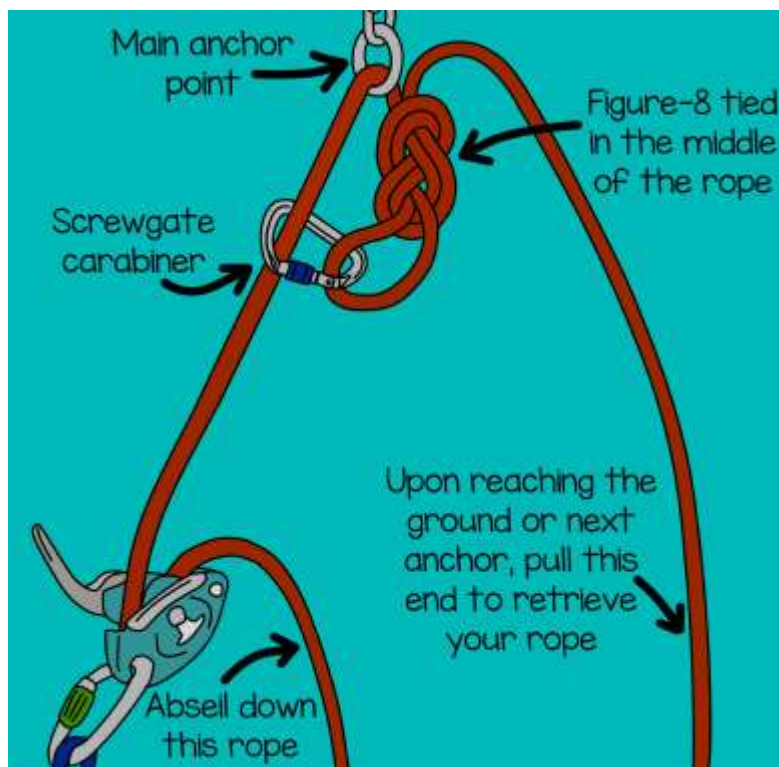
If you abseil into space you will not be able to swing in to the wall if you lose contact with it. You can risk creating a swing by kicking against the wall if it is gently overhanging but if you go over a largish overhang and lose contact you are in trouble. Make sure you have enough slings or rope to prussic. Remember your chalk bag belt which is 6 or 7mm rope. Shoe laces can also be used.

You can create a marginal amount of swinging by throwing something away from yourself but still attached to it like a heavy rack or ruck-sack. However, you will be lucky to create a side way's swinging movement of one metre or so. Your best option is to sit on the prussic and using the remaining ends of the rope try and snag something on the cliff face which is away from you and pull yourself in. If that fails prussic up.

How do you cut a rope with no knife? Use a rock to crush it or find a sharp edge.

When you abseil make sure the ropes are hanging free so that they do not twist. Abseiling on a Munter hitch will always twist the rope.

### **Abseiling with Grigri or other single rope device**



### **Lap coiling.**

Rope management is a very difficult thing to master and lap coiling especially so with double ropes. In a hanging stance, I prefer to tie off loops of rope on one side with the loops getting short and shorter leaving the first loop as long as possible and clipping them on to a single biner. So it means that as you pay the rope out you will sequentially release the ropes from the biner. If there is a lot of wind then you can hang loops on both sides of yourself. Another option that I have never used is to flake the rope into a ruck sack if it is large enough.

### **Scrambling with trad gear.**

If you are on steep loose terrain it is best to coil the rope alpine rather than butterfly style so that it does not drag on the ground behind and pull off rocks. Pack the gear into a rucksack or to a bandolier or sling so it also does not catch behind you.





Remember that to avoid a tangle and twists alpine coiled ropes must be flaked holding the rope in your hand and uncoiling it one loop at a time. Do not drop it on the ground.

### **Useful references:**

Although I do not agree with all the methods described on this website, a useful guide to trad climbing can be found here: <http://www.vdiffclimbing.com/>.

## **PAPER COPY AND DIGITAL PDF ROUTE GUIDES**

Compiling a route guide is a labour of love as anyone who has done so knows all too well. Many people prefer to have a nice glossy paper copy but as aesthetic and useful as this is there are many advantages to making digital copies of a route guide.

- A digital guide can be easily and frequently updated with additions, amendments and corrections.
- It is easily communicable
- It is environmentally friendly as it avoids costly use of paper (trees) although individual pages can be printed.
- It allows for high resolution photo topos that can be so detailed as to show the actual rock features that are as small as 10cm squared.
- It allows for an entire route guide to be stored on a smart phone that is easily transportable, small and light
- It allows the use of hyper-links within the document or to reference the internet through URL's.
- The digital guide has been compiled in A4 size and with large Arial 20 pt. size so that the photos and the text can be more easily viewed in the portrait or landscape layout on a smart phone without having to magnify the text. The best way to view the photo topos of the routes is in portrait mode.

The disadvantage of digital guides is it does not lend itself to being commercially viable as once down-loaded it is indeed so easy to transmit to others. In this regard, I kindly request that unless you have purchased a paper copy, anyone wishing to download or use this guide should please make a donation to the MCSA of their respective sections of R350.00 to be used for and in the interests of trad climbers and the preservation of access to the Du Toit's Kloof Mountains. I can assure the reader it is small change for the amount of time, effort and dedication it took to develop the climbs described and also to compile and maintain this guide.

The paper copy of the guide will be published once the digital guide has "matured" so to speak. By this I mean that over a 6 month or so period the digital guide can be used and comments, additions and corrections can be made. Thereafter the paper copy will hopefully be more accurate and complete.

The user-friendly standard for paper copies are A5 size and very small page margins of 1cm or so all round and that includes the gutter or centre-fold of the book. However, I have made the gutter margin larger so that one can more easily scan or photograph a page without losing any detail.

Thank you,

Snort Charles Edelstein June 2017

# HOW TO USE THE PDF DIGITAL GUIDE

1. Download the guide to your PC or smart phone.
2. Practise and familiarize yourself using the hyperlinks so as to easily navigate through the document and the route descriptions.
3. Print important pages if you are not familiar with the area. Important pages are designated with a watermark as "Print Friendly".
4. If you are unfamiliar with the area then ensure you have studied the lie of the land in advance on the photographs in the guide with particular regard to the descents.

## GRADING OF ROUTES

The first route that was established on Yellowwood amphitheatre was "**Time Warp**" and by and large it was graded G1 (19) with a bit of aid here and there. This "grade" belies the seriousness of the route and by any measure your competency level to complete this route requires the capability being comfortable with on-sighting grade 20 if not 21 on Table Mountain.

"**Armageddon Time**" is a complete sand bag at grade 23. I have on many occasions climbed routes that are graded much harder at Yellow Wood, Table Mountain, Magaliesberg and even Blouberg but found the crux pitch of "**Armageddon Time**" at my mental and physical limit when I first managed to on-sight it. Despite several attempts since then, I have repeatedly failed in "sending" it on lead or top-rope. I have nevertheless in the interim free climbed, albeit on top rope, the "Direct" pitch (26) and, then, on the same day failed to free climb the 23 pitch.

Grading routes at Yellowwood as elsewhere is a conundrum. At the time of publishing the first edition of this route guide, mid 2017, I can safely say that I have climbed more routes and done more climbing at Yellowwood and in the Du Tiots' Kloof range than anyone else. What is more relevant is that I have also partnered more people on different routes in this area than anyone else in the past. So, I have a darn good feel what the grades should be on a comparable basis to routes in the area on the one hand, and to routes elsewhere of similar style and character.

So, despite the sandbag grades of "**Time Warp**" and "**Armageddon Time**" (which justifies a solid 24+ to on-sight) I have endeavoured to rather err on softer grades for the other routes in this area. To this end the crux pitch of "**Prime Time Direct**" has been upgraded to 25+ from 24 based on the committing and intimidating nature of the pitch. And I think that is fair and reasonable as it is overall at least as hard an on-sight as either pitch of "**Africa Arete**" 25 on Table Mountain or "**No Longer at Ease**". 25. In fact, the first pitch has also been upgraded to 23 from 22.

To simplify matters, I have suggested an overall "*competency*" grade of the routes in both the British, European, American and the South African/Australian systems. What this means is that if you have the notion to on-sight a particular route then your overall ability must fall in the ball-park grade.

As an example, "**Armageddon Time**" requires at least the general competency to climb British grade E4, American grade 5.11c/d, European grade 7a and South African grade 24 to have a reasonably good chance of on-sighting the route. "**Prime Time**" requires a competency grade 1 notch higher, (E5, 5.12a, 7b 25) and the **Direct** another notch up. (E6, 5.12b, 7c 26). I must remind and emphasize the fact that there are no individual pitches of this grade on the route.

When it comes to the easier routes, the same principle applies. Rocking up at Yellowwood, photo topo in hand provides no guarantee that you will on-sight a route such as "**Divine Time**" that does not have a move harder than 19. "**Last Laugh**" on Table Mountain and even the crux move on "**Atlantic Crag**" is hard by comparison. However, unless you are experienced, fit and au fait with

adventure climbing of this nature you will have your work cut out to on-sight this route. Good preparation to do so is if you have on-sighted or at least repeated “**Touch and Go**”, “**Magnetic Wall**” and say “**Farewell to Arms**” on table mountain during the preceding week or so. Then you should find it grade “19”.

With regard to Yellowwood ravine familiarize yourself with the main land marks as you hike up. In order these are as follows.

- The first electricity pylon
  - The Tree growing out of the rock
  - The donga
  - The short 3m scramble
  - The Franschoek aloe, the halfway point at the base of the rocky scree.
  - The entrance to the Yellowwood forest
  - The Leopard camera
  - The exit from the forest on the right.
  - Small Time Crag
  - The final boulder scree
  - The named Buttresses
    1. Sublime Time
    2. Lekker Time
    3. Timerity
    4. Divine Time
    5. Tea Time
    6. Extra Time
    7. Fun Time
  - 
  - The start of Prime Time Direct at the centre of the Main Amphitheatre
  - Smalblaar
  - The Snotter Camp and Water drip
  - The Timerity Buttress and Abseil point
5. Once you have the cliff on which the route you intend to climb fully in view which is usually about two thirds of the way up the trail load the photo-topo and carefully identify and sync the features.
  6. Then go do it.

## HISTORY

### “SMALLBLAAR” 16

The route ascending the ridge supporting the west side of the amphitheatre is called Smalblaar (thin leaf.) Mike Mamacos, Bob Davies, Jannie Graaff and Frank Villa climbed this route 23 December 1953. Mike wrote that there: *“rises a ridge which has probably been looked on as a prospective route by most rock climbers who have passed this way, and who realize that ridges like that of the Klein Winterhoek do not sprout from every peak”*.

*“The ridge is indeed a knife-edge and a well-honed one at that”*.

On inspecting the ridge from behind the “gendarme” Mike writes:



*“The prospect (of climbing the ridge) looked so hopeless that we were all but unanimous that we should turn back while there was yet time and spend the rest of the day wallowing in the pools below”.*

It turned out that Smalblaar yielded fairly easily with *“the standard of rockwork having nowhere exceeded mild “F” ”.*

### **“YELLOWWOOD CRACK”**

J de V Graaf and R F Davies climbed this route in 1959 taking 7 hours from the road. De V Graaf described as a “D” grade climb with a grotty start. Hilton Davies constructed an abseil descent down the crack in 2014 and Snort (Charles Edelstein) constructed an abseil descent on the west facing wall on **“Tea Time” Buttress** that was named **“Zip Time”**.

Snort (C Edelstein) revisited Yellowwood crack in 2015 without the benefit of the original route description and armed with a rope and a few nuts and cams soloed the route. The first 60m avoided the grotty start described in De V Graaf route description by climbing the clean and easy ramp to the to a ledge. Some tricky moves on steep dodgy rock (Grade 16 or F2) then attained the rib to the left of the crack and made for easy climbing to the top. The Abseil route constructed by Hilton Davies has since deteriorated and is not safe.

Solo climbing Yellowwood Crack is not recommended!

### **“BLACK WATERFALL FACE”**

This was the next major route to emanate from Yellowwood ravine in 1965 by K Fletcher and R Williams 1965.

### **“TIME WARP” 22**

Further development of routes on the amphitheatre remained in abeyance for some 24 years when Tony Dick and Dave Cheesmond returned to climb the classic route Time Warp in 1977.

This is indeed a serious undertaking that mostly follows the obvious line in the middle of the amphitheatre. It requires bold leading on dodgy rock with poor protection on at least 3 pitches. It is not for the faint hearted.

The name of the route relates to the notion by Tony that:

*“Moving back in time through the pitches, we knew that this route must have been climbed before. But it wasn’t. Surely Mike and “Boots were here? But they weren’t. Maybe we had beaten them to the route; they must be cursing themselves behind us! Were they really competitive in those days? Or is it these days? Timelessness is here on this old new route”.*

Perhaps Mike and “Boots” already knew what Tony and Dave only found out on the first ascent on pitch 11:

*“Climb the crack a bit more desperately (good nut runners)”*

I have climbed that pitch and the first part is true but did not notice the *“good nut runners”*. Pitch 12 is just as sketchy with poor rock to start and no pro for several metres with the only comfort the knowledge that you would fall directly on your partner if a hold broke.

Tony and I freed the pendulum pitch on the right in 2012 some 45 years after the first ascent. This was made less challenging by the fact that a was bolt placed by German climbers on the

slab to the right on their route “Your Mother His Face” which joins Time Warp at this point. To my knowledge Time Warp has rarely succumbed to ascents in the last 20 years or so. I am aware that Richard Behne, Mike Scott, Hilton Davies and Bruce Daniel climbed the route over that period. There is some evidence that other climbers including Jonathan Fischer and others freed this pitch in the time past.

### **“RED FACED WATERFALL ROUTE”**

This route was the next new route climbed in 1981 by John Moss, Peter De Tolley and Mike Scott.

### **“ARMAGEDDON TIME” 23+**

There was again a dearth of development when Ross Suter, Jono Fisher and Gordon collectively and after several attempts climbed the classic and super hard Armageddon Time 24. (The grade is indeed harder than 23 by any measure and even more so in the context of Yellowwood amphitheatre. Ross’s account in the 1987 journal gives credence to the capricious weather conditions at Yellowwood. On their first attempt they camped at the base of the wall and did three pitches and rapped off in half-light.

*“The rain woke us the next morning early shattering our hopes as the weather deteriorated The wind lashed violently on the flanking ridges. Already drenched we juggled up the fixed ropes to retrieve our gear. We then packed swiftly, and numbly began the downward slide to the road.*

They returned 2 weeks later but the headwall off the halfway ledge thwarted them:

*“For the second time, nature had cast down the gauntlet, asserting its supremacy and demanding respect”*

They returned 3 months later and found a way off the half way ledge and climbed up a further 2 pitches but a rain storm swatted them off:

*“Bitterly cold and disillusioned, we made our way carefully in the dark and wet to the car below”.*

Ross and Gordon returned once more but Jonathan could not accompany them and they completed the route. Ross wrote:

*“Armageddon Time is a classic route in every respect”.* Time has validated this sentiment and 30 years on it is still a test piece for any trad climber to do. To this day it is very rarely climbed and even more rarely done on-sight. Most attempts even by experienced climbers are frustrated, if not by the technical difficulty, then by the elements. In a single day conditions can change from arctic cold to suffocating heat escalating the grade by at least one point for every 5 degrees below 15 C or above 25 C. And it is unpredictable even with modern weather forecasts.

### **“BLOOD IS SWEETER THAN HONEY” 22 and “THE SECOND COMING” 23**

Paul Schlotfeldt and Dave Shewell did the first ascent of the “Blood is Sweeter than Honey” 22 and Tony Dick and Dave Davies climbed a route they called “Second Coming” 23. These routes are rarely repeated and rarely on-sight flashed as they have complex and scary run-out sections that require a great degree of composure and skill to negotiate.

In the late eighties sport climbing took off and trad climbing, and more particularly new route climbing at Yellowwood and Du Toit’s Kloof was eclipsed for more almost 2 decades. Any trad climber that could, climbed Armageddon Time and there were occasional ascents of Smalblaar, No More Bells, Time Warp and Blood is Sweeter than Honey.

## **“NO MORE BELLS”**

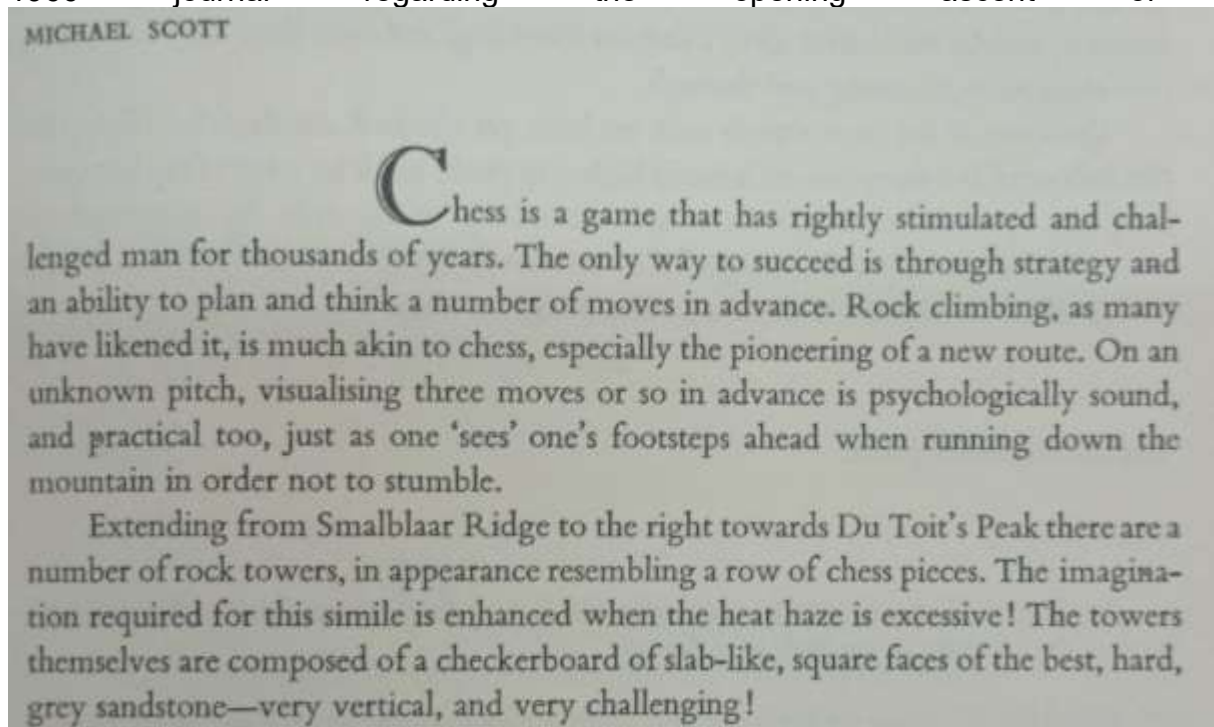
There is some dispute as to who first climbed this excellent route on the Chess Pieces. Suffice it to say that David Davies and Allen Ross climbed it in 1992 and wrote it up in the MCSA journal. It seems though that John Moss, Richard Smithers and Ed Harris climbed this line as long ago as the seventies.

## **“PRIME TIME” (2004)**

And then came Prime Time, the vision of Leo Rust and Lloyd Turner. (FA ascent 2004; FFA Leo Rust and Tony Dick 2004).

It is indeed a very sad chapter in Yellowwood history that Lloyd fell to his death in September 2006 soon after completing this masterpiece while hiking round past the gendarme in search of new adventures on the chess pieces. To the best of my knowledge this is the only recorded fatality in the Yellowwood “precinct” of climbing.

Prime Time and especially the Direct 25R (FA C Edelstein December 2008) is a route in a league of its own in the Western Cape and one of the finest routes of its kind anywhere in the world. It is very steep, scary and varied and there is almost no easy climbing. Every pitch is a problem-solving exercise at the grade. It brings to mind the utterances of Mike Scott in his article in the 1966 journal regarding the opening ascent of **Castle**.



There is no fixed gear and no piton scars on Prime Time or the Direct.

It proudly rises smack bang in the middle of the amphitheatre.

Prime Time Direct is the route to do at Yellowwood. It is right up there with many of the harder multi-pitch trad classics at Blouberg.

## **NEWBORN 29 (2007)**

In the late 90's Sean Maasch started bolting a route in the left third of the Amphitheatre. He abandoned the project and some 10 years later in 2007 Jeremy Samson assisted by Jimbo Smith completed the project. It is considered to be one of the best modern multi-pitch sport

routes in the country coming in at the challenging grade of 29. Nevertheless it is an anomaly at Yellowwood and inconsistent with the "trad" ethos of the place.

The bolting of this route caused much debate and controversy at the time and especially so after some sponsored German climbers came along in September 2009. Contrary to the prevailing ethic at the time, they went on a mission to establish new routes using what they called "**TraSchlaBo-style**". In an article that they published on The Climb.za website they wrote: *"In total we used 6 bolts on 9 pitches, because of our style, the TraSchlaBo-style (which means Trad-Piton-Bolt). At the belays, we always placed one bolt which was alongside a piton / cam or wire."*

<http://www.climbing.co.za/2009/11/your-mothers-his-face/>

The Germans named their routes "**Fighting The Dark Side Of Gravity**" and "**Your Mother his Face**" (Sep 2009). The route "**Fighting The Dark Side Of Gravity**" finishes at the Halfway and Ledge weaves in and around those of Judgement Day. All the unnecessary bolts have been chopped by Hilton Davies and Bruce Daniel in the interim

Soon after these routes were opened, Joe Mohle and Charles Edelstein went to investigate and climbed the pitches of "Your Mother his Face" to the halfway ledge.

However, Edelstein and Mohle found that there were 13 bolts on the first 5 pitches and no less than 10 bolts at the stances up to the halfway ledge - a total of 23 bolts on the first half of the route. There were also 4 pitons of which one was loose. 3 bolts were adjacent to bomber gear placements.

<http://snort-charlesedelstein.blogspot.com/2010/02/this-is-what-happens-to-sponsorship.html>

Their modus operandi caused an uproar in the climbing community and especially so as they had not bothered to climb any of the existing routes. Much debate took place and Hilton Davies published a consensus code of ethics on Climb.za:

[http://www.climbing.co.za/wiki/Yellowwood Amphitheatre#Ethics](http://www.climbing.co.za/wiki/Yellowwood_Amphitheatre#Ethics)

**"Your Mother His Face"** climbs to the halfway ledge and then from there, it climbs two pitches before joining **"Time Warp"**

No sooner had the Germans departed when a Spanish party in December 2009 did the first ascent of **Great White Shark** up the left side of the amphitheatre. This route has been climbed to the halfway ledge by C Edelstein and Gregory Thompson in 2016 who found several 8mm bolts in situ that are unnecessary.

## **"FUN TIME" 21**

In reaction to the Germans making bolted stances and using excessive fixed gear, Charles Edelstein, went with Tristan Firman, and Farrel Davids and did the first ascent of Fun Time. Like so many routes at Yellowwood, the route was improved over time to establish a classic climb that unlike its neighbours further right is of moderate grade and well protected.

## **"TEA TIME" 24**

Was done with by Charles Edelstein, Jonathon Hajos and Ilya Kohl ground up in a day in early 2011. It was the first attempt at venturing on to the east buttresses. Although there was some excellent climbing on it, the first pitch was chossy and the final pitches too easy to allow for the

crafting of a very good route. Jonathan also dropped his climbing shoe just before following the 24 crux pitch. The route has not been repeated to date. (June 2017).

**“JUDGEMENT DAY” 25A1** (12 January 2012) and **“AFRICAN TIME” 25** (FFA: February 2012) and **“FANTASTIC TIME” 23** (FFA April 2012)

These three routes were developed respectively by Hilton Davies and friends, Johann Lanz and Robert Zippies and Charles Edelstein and friends. They all took several attempts at different times over 2 or 3 years to complete and are classic Yellowwood test pieces. None of the routes have any fixed gear and all have at least severity 2 or 3 (S2 or S3) pitches.

The stories of the ascents can be read here.

<http://www.climbing.co.za/2012/01/judgment-day-a-gnarly-new-route-on-the-yellowwood-amphitheatre/>

<http://www.climbing.co.za/2011/02/fantastic-time-at-yellowwood/>

**“SHOW TIME” 25** was quite an undertaking and involved at least 6 attempts over four years to bag the first free ascent. The project started in March 2011 and the FFA was finally achieved in 2015 with Willem Le Roux. Since then it has had some modifications with Clinton Martinengo and Peter Robbins straightening the route above pitch 4 but this makes it much harder at grade 26 and does not necessarily make for better quality climbing. It is a pretty tough route and one of the most challenging on the main Amphitheatre.

## JABULANI

Jabulani was climbed in September 2010 by visiting Austrian climbers touted as **“Salewa athletes”**. As were the previous European visitors, they were sponsored climbers who gave scant regard to the prevailing ethic of bolt free climbing at Yellowwood and deemed it fit to create multiple fixed stances. Hilton Davies and company eliminated most of the bolts on the pitches to the half-way ledge. The route has not received a second ascent as at June 2017.

They published their route on Climb.co.za claiming the following: ***“We do not know the history of the wall exactly, but we couldn’t find out any information about routes in that part of the wall and there were also no clues or traces of previous climbers found during the ascent”***.

Their statements and actions were at best disingenuous as there were several climbers, myself included, that were actively working on routes at Yellowwood and were publishing our actions on the Climb.co.za forums. The pitch starting from the halfway ledge had been climbed before as an easier alternative to the crux pitch of Armageddon Time. Furthermore the bolting debate at Yellowwood had raged on more than one Climb.co.za forum topics starting with Hilton Davies’ post in November 2009 and continuing till June 2010.

## [Bad Things Happen When Good Men Do Nothing](#)

Again, the “Bolt free ethic” of climbing routes at Yellowwood was thwarted by sponsored European climbers.

Since 2010 no further bolting has taken place on new or existing routes at Yellowwood.

## EAST BUTTRESS DEVELOPMENT

After **Tea Time, East Buttress** development was abandoned until 2014. Bad weather around Fitzroy, my planned destination in January 2014, resulted in me again casting a critical eye on the **“East Buttresses”**. What attracted me was the inverted triangular headwall high up on what is now coined **“Timerity Buttress”**. A host of world class routes have since been opened on the



**East Buttresses** and there is still potential for more routes, variations of routes and link-ups. **Test of Time 24** is a major route comparable to the main wall routes in difficulty and length. **Timerity, Good Time, Extra Time, Fine Time, Leisure Time, Air Time, Time after Time** and even **Lekker Time** are all excellent routes with some of the best trad climbing to be found anywhere in the world. **Kungexesha** (Xhosa: **It's about time**) came together at a mere grade 24 as recently as September 2017 and follows the very user friendly **Timerity abseil** descent route for some of the way and then deviates to push straight through the middle of the headwall.

## CHESSE PIECES DEVELOPMENT.

In tandem with the development of routes above Yellowwood ravine climbs were established on the so-called **Chess Pieces** that are the rock buttresses to the right (west) of **Smalblaar Ridge**. These buttresses feature some of the best rock in the area comparable to that of Krakadouw and Tafelberg in the Cederberg.

On November 5 1966, Mike Scott with his climbing partner Gabriel Athiros who was suffering from an near useless arm due to and anti-tetanus injection the day before, established **The Castle**. \*\*\*\* Mike in his article had this to say: *"On some of the most superb rock we have yet climbed, another three faces like this followed, boosting our excitement higher in pitch, pitch by pitch"*.

F Fischer, Greg Mosely and A Killick did the first ascent of the **The Rook's Pawn** in 1967 that they gave a 3 star rating to. They described this route as *"Your next move. A Castle encore"*.

They then went on to climb the **Knight**. They described the route as *"A 'more' chimney piece."*

Both routes were free climbed at the moderate F grade.

Other than **No More Bells**, further development of the Chess pieces stalled until there was a resurgence of interest some **forty years later**. Since around 2010, a multitude of modern classic routes, some quite difficult with mid-twenties grade pitches, have been established by a number of climbers. The routes include **Fire Start** by Robert Zipplies and Malcolm Gowans and **Knight Rider** by Richard *Squeaks* Halsey and Anthony Hall in 2011.

## ETHICS:

The prevailing ethic for Yellowwood is **"Tread Lightly!"**.

**"Tread lightly" means** no bolting of belay stances unless all possible alternatives have been completely exhausted. No placing of bolts for running belays that are not absolutely essential. No use of pitons, unless necessary. No use of power drills is accepted!

Climbers are asked to respect the prevailing ethic which is intended to preserve the aesthetic appeal of Yellowwood as a world-class Trad climbing destination.

It is essential for first time visitors to climb at least one of the existing classic trad routes to appreciate the committing and adventurous nature of the climbing at Yellowwood. Older routes such as Armageddon Time (and the direct), Blood is Sweeter than Honey and Time Warp are all test pieces for their grade. Newer routes





such as Prime Time (and the direct), Show Time and Fantastic Time as well as "routes in progress" of which there are at least 3, are no less demanding at the grade. Most, if not all the trad routes on the main wall have at least one "R" (run-out) pitch but none are "X" rated.

There has been much debate about Yellowwood and the most active Yellowwood climbers have talked extensively so as to settle the ethos of this high-value cliff. Yellowwood is a very special Trad climbing venue and there have been some mis-steps in route development at the crag. Newborn was bolted many years ago before locals had given much thought to bolting and ethics. It is a legacy that shall remain, but should not be seen as guidance for route development at Yellowwood. More recently four new routes have been established by visitors who have made extensive use of non-essential bolting. Whilst route development is encouraged, non-essential bolting is not; and these new routes are getting their non-essential bolts removed. They will remain as good adventurous routes.

## WHERE TO STAY

The best place to stay is actually in Cape Town if you are a local climber as the most efficient way of climbing at Yellowwood is with an Alpine Start that will depend on the time of the year. The trail is well marked and can be negotiated with head torches but familiarity will obviously save one time and trouble as regards finding the parking spot and then doing the hike up.

Du Kloof Lodge just a few kilometres distant offers various tiers of excellent accommodation from bunk beds to luxury apartments and the food and vibe is stellar

The Mountain Club Hut further west is also an option but I would still not rate it over doing a day trip or staying at the lodge that has bunk beds.

## SAFETY

There has been one incident of a break in to a vehicle and that was in March 2017. My climbing partners and I had removed some extra gear and stashed it way up the slope and hidden it well. This gear was stolen and a window of the car smashed but nothing was stolen from the vehicle. There is no doubt that we were observed as we parked by someone who saw us stash the gear.

So, to prevent breakage and theft the following is recommended.

1. Leave as few vehicles as possible
2. Do not leave anything valuable in the car or boot (trunk).
3. Leave the note as explained above.
4. Lock the car and leave a window open to prevent breakage
5. Leave the cubbyhole open (glove box).
6. Leave a snack in case a vagrant comes along and is hungry. (I have come across one fellow before who I found in the car having left the window open and claiming he wanted food.

I think it unwise to leave a car overnight although there are many occasions that one is benighted on Yellowwood and your return to your vehicle may be late at night. Consider taking a bicycle and after dropping off your partner(s) drive your car to Du Kloof Lodge and discretely park it there. The just as discretely ride back to the start of the hike and hide the bicycle. This will add about an hour or so to your approach time.

There is no track record of anyone being attacked by wild life or insects at Yellowwood. Leopards are endemic to the area and are spotted from time to time. Read Johann Lanz' account of the first ascent of [African Time](#) in this regard. Baboons will bark at you and you may see scorpions

and snakes. I have never had any insects bother me other than the odd fly. Theoretically there should be many puff adders but in all the years of climbing there I have only seen one tiny one all curled up and minding its own business at the start of the 4<sup>th</sup> pitch of ***Fantastic Time*** from the halfway ledge. We sat right next to it for ages and had lunch before noticing it.

The climbs are to all intents and purposes “remote” even though the N1 National Road winds through the valley below. The closest towns are miles away and there are no communities within 10km. So it is extremely unlikely that your personal safety is at risk or that there is a risk of any gear or equipment might be stolen. If indeed you forget or deliberately leave some gear behind or get a cam stuck on a route, you are very likely to find it where you left it on your return whether it be days or months later.

## WILD FIRES:

The Western Cape is notorious for wild fires that devastate our mountains and even our towns and cities every year from around January to May. At the time of this writing extensive fires have all but destroyed Knysna a coastal town some 300km away and it is mid-june. The Hawequas mountains are also frequently burned down and even this year there have been several fires that threatened the area and that destroyed the “outhouse” latrine at the MCSA Du Toit’s Kloof hut some 8 km west of Yellowwood ravine.

As mentioned already Yellowwood ravine forms a natural fire break but this does not guarantee that the fire cannot burn up and around it. Should a fire break out below you then you are unlikely to be at risk on the climbs as they are sparsely vegetated and your best bet is to climb to the cleanest rock. If you are at the base and the fire breaks out then I would recommend you head for base of the ***Tea Time Buttress*** and hang there above the clump of Yellowwoods.



***“Fire lily” above “Fun Time” March 2011***

The top of the amphitheatre can be very dangerous if there is a wild-fire up there and it would be unwise to try and out-run it. There are several options of escape depending on the strength and wind direction. If you are familiar with and near ***Down Time*** then quickly descending the first two abseils will allow for you to compose your-self on the long comfy ledge about 65m down. So you would be safe there even there is a fire on the Half Way Ledge.

If you are able to get to the ***Timidity Abseil*** the cave that stretches to the left will also be immune from fire in its rocky middle section. Any spread of the fire to the cave should be easily contained. Make sure you have harvested some green branches from bushes in the area to swat out any fire that may come your way.

## ASPECT AND WEATHER:(AKA how to climb a route at yellowwood)

The Main Yellowwood amphitheatre faces almost due North and is sunny for most of the day unless there is cloud. Depending on the time of the year the sun will start encroaching on the main wall around an hour before mid-day starting on the west side at Smalblaar and then eventually bathing the whole amphitheatre in bright sunlight till late afternoon.

Routes can be climbed all year round at Yellowwood but local climbers that are experienced at climbing at Yellowwood should be consulted as to what to climb in a given weather situation. One can have a very cold and unpleasant experience in mid-summer (December) if the ambient temperature is cold due to the South Easter Wind. Sunshine can then be both a blessing and a curse on the same day depending on the air temperature and wind speed. The coldest period to climb at Yellowwood is usually from July to December but very warm days are not uncommon.

In summer if the weather is forecast to be hot at Worcester (more than 30 degrees centigrade, start very early and avoid the east side routes on the main amphitheatre unless there is a strong South Easter wind forecast. If this is the case try and get to the halfway ledge before the sun gets to you and keep going up the next pitch of your route. The halfway ledge can be baking hot but higher up a pitch or two the South Easter will be cooling you.

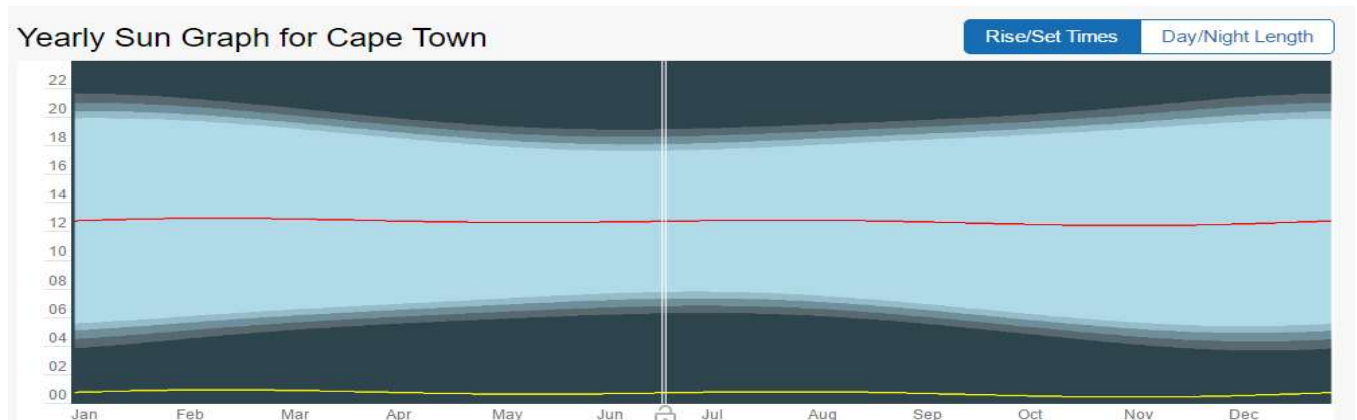
The corollary is that it on a cold day go climb in the sun on the amphitheatre.

The upper pitches of **Fantastic Time** gets shade later on in the afternoon which can be a god-send but this is never a reason to delay an early morning start on a hot day. **Fun Time** gets the sun later (30minutes or so) and is a relatively easy route and slightly shorter. The final pitch is also shaded by the corner as is second last 22 pitch of **Test of Time** in the later afternoon.

After heavy rain it takes at least 48 hours for most routes to dry. **Play Time** stays wet the longest of all the routes and the first pitch of **Fine Time** has wet holds most of the winter although they do not materially affect the difficulty of the climbing.

Most climbing trips to Yellowwood emanate from Cape Town early in the morning, sometimes as early as 02h00. This link provides appropriate information of the day-light available at different times of the year.

<https://www.timeanddate.com/sun/south-africa/cape-town>



As can be seen, in mid-summer there is 17 hours of day-light available and in mid-winter 12 hours. By leaving very early from Cape Town and walking at least the first hour in the dark one can make available some 20 hours of climbing time to do a route in summer and this is usually more than enough time to complete a route that is in your comfort grade.

There are various options of familiarizing yourself and improving your chance of success of doing an on-sight route at Yellowwood.

Option 1 is to entice a local climber familiar with the area and the climbs to accompany you. Contact can be made by posting a request on [www.Climb.co.za](http://www.Climb.co.za). This will often be successful and if not at least some very important weather beta can be garnered.

Option 2 is to consult with an experienced local climber and do one of the easier and shorter routes on the east buttresses, **Smalblaar** or **Chess Pieces**. This will familiarize you with the parking spot, walk up, the rest of the lie of the land and finally, and most importantly the descent.



Option 3 is to hike up and bivvy the night before. This is not recommended for several reasons.

1. You have to carry more gear and more water,
2. it is often very hot and tiring even late in the evening,
3. the bivvy is not exactly ideal and
4. it is difficult to get going in the morning if the temperature is cold which it can be even in summer.

Having said that the author (Snort) has bivvied up there several times).

## YELLOWWOOD FAUNA

Seeing a leopard at yellowwood is a thrilling event and they are indeed endemic in the region. They frequently pass the motion camera installed by Johann Lanz around 2012 and these and many other pictures are from that camera. One passes the tree visible in the first picture and this is very obviously a favourite with the critters who sharpen their nails on it. There are almost always fresh claw marks.



Dassies (Rock Hyrax) small rabbit like creatures linked to the Elephant are common as are baboons. Baboons are often heard barking but to date have kept their distance from climbers. Rock Hyrax make a loud shrieking sound when they perceive danger and a variety of the other sounds too. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vP9ie2PSY0>

There are various mice and other rodents that love chewing on the plastic caps of water containers stashed around.

There are also the rare and very shy Grey Rhebuk bokies (deer) from which the shoes Reebok took its name

[http://www.krugerpark.co.za/africa\\_rhebuck.html](http://www.krugerpark.co.za/africa_rhebuck.html)



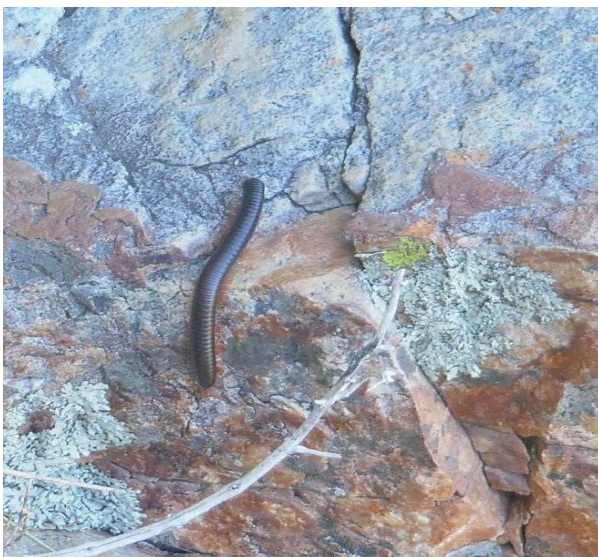
***Black Eagle***



***Rock Kestrel***

Pairs of Verreaux's (Black) Eagles that hunt the Dassies and the occasional Rooivalk Rock Kestrel with its distinctive sound can be seen and heard.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ym4ajG6W3QI>

Snakes are probably plentiful but I have only had occasion to see one small puff adder well-hidden and curled on the half way ledge at the start of the 19 pitch of ***Fantastic Time***.



Lizards abound too and Shongololos:



# YELLOWWOOD FLORA

Yellowwood Ravine is situated in the Hawequas mountain catchment area and is very much part of the Cape Floral Kingdom or Cape Floristic region. The dominant species of plants are, you guessed it, the “Real” Yellow Wood trees *Podocarpus Latifolius* that clutter the ravine and fortunately form by the evergreen drought resistance leaves a fire break of sorts. Classics sratchy fynbos, endemic to the area including slangbos, proteaceae, and Climber’s friend abound on each side of the Ravine and border the trail to the base of the amphitheatre. Many plants are aromatic

## Buchu (Agothosma Betulina)

The distinctive serated leaves and flowers of the Buchi plant



Climber’s friend *Cliffortia ruscifolia* is prolific on the walk-up and its spiky “tentacles” grab at your legs and arms on the hike. It sheds its tiny leaves that often cover handholds and nary a climber at Yellowwood or anywhere in the Western Cape will escape without many painful pricks of their needle sharp leaves when through the thickest of calluses.



Needle sharp  
dry leaves





**Slangbos (Snake Bush)**



**Restios**

Your clothes get infiltrated by the delicious "lemon grass" fragrance of this plant: ***Pelargonium Crispum*** (Crush some leaves in your hand and you will smell sweet lemon all day. And you make a "tea infusion" from the leaves of the "*Buchu*" plant

<http://www.plantzafrica.com/plantnop/pelargcrispum.htm>



This beautiful tree is almost exactly half way up the walk and marks the start of a short rocky scree. It is a treat to see it in bloom. It is called a **Fan Aloe** or **Kaapse Kokerboom** due to its resemblance to the **Quiver Tree**.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aloe\\_plicatilis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aloe_plicatilis)







Unfortunately, there is also invasion of the area by ***Hakea*** which is prolific on the walk up to Masquerade. However, it has not taken over Yellowwood ravine yet.



## GETTING THERE:

Yellowwood ravine is in the Du Toit's Kloof Valley about an hour's drive from Cape Town City Centre. It is easy to find as the Left Sloping Wall glowers forebodingly over the N1 Highway on its south side. It can be problematic to see the Amphitheatre if it is swathed in cloud but if this is the case your chance of completing a route is considerably diminished. Rather go and climb at Hellfire unless the weather report is clearly favourable.

1. [DRIVING DIRECTIONS](#)
2. **SAFETY**
3. **THE HIKE**

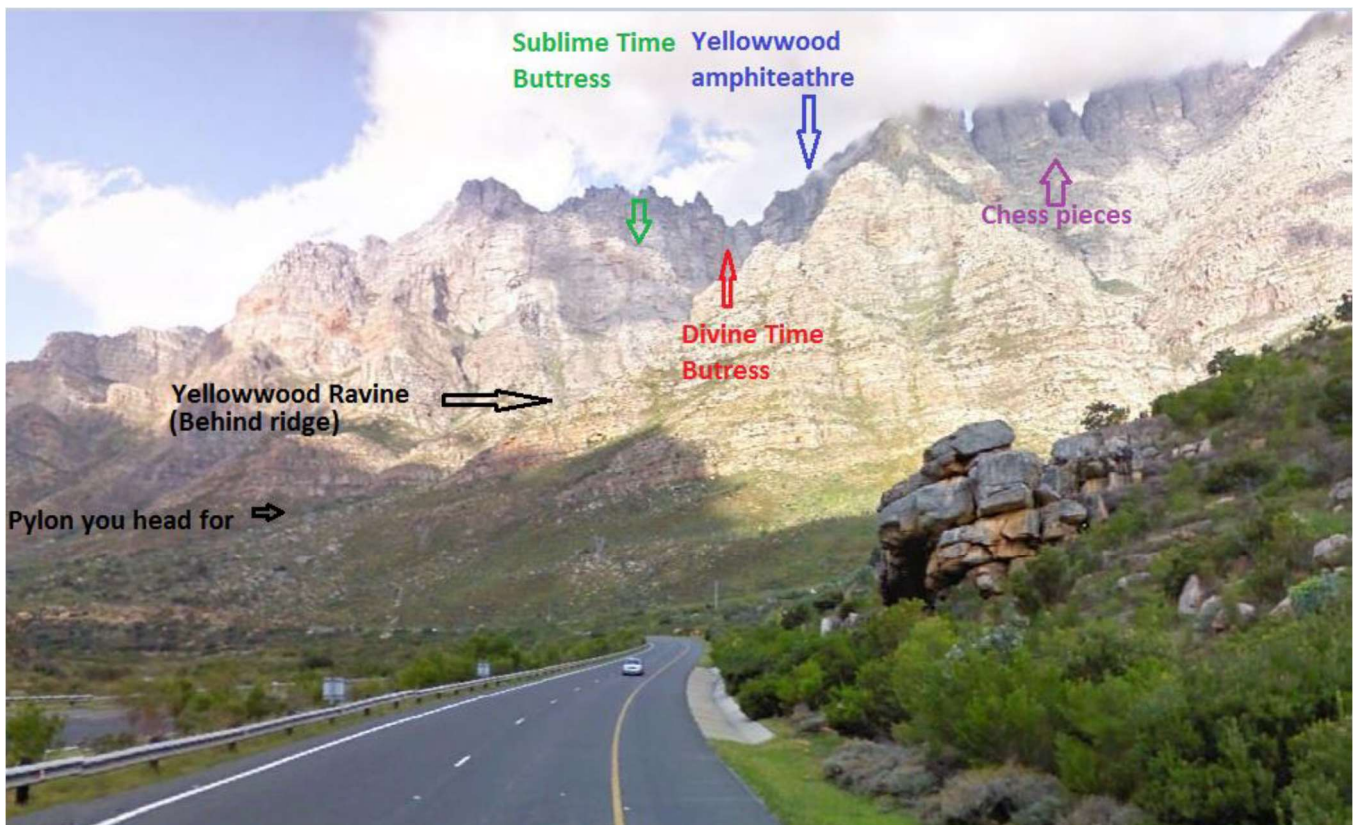
### DRIVING DIRECTIONS – 1 Hour

From Cape Town drive along the N1 towards Paarl and continue through the toll plaza and the Huguenot Tunnel. You will pass the Du Kloof Lodge on the left where you will pop in for a beer later on.

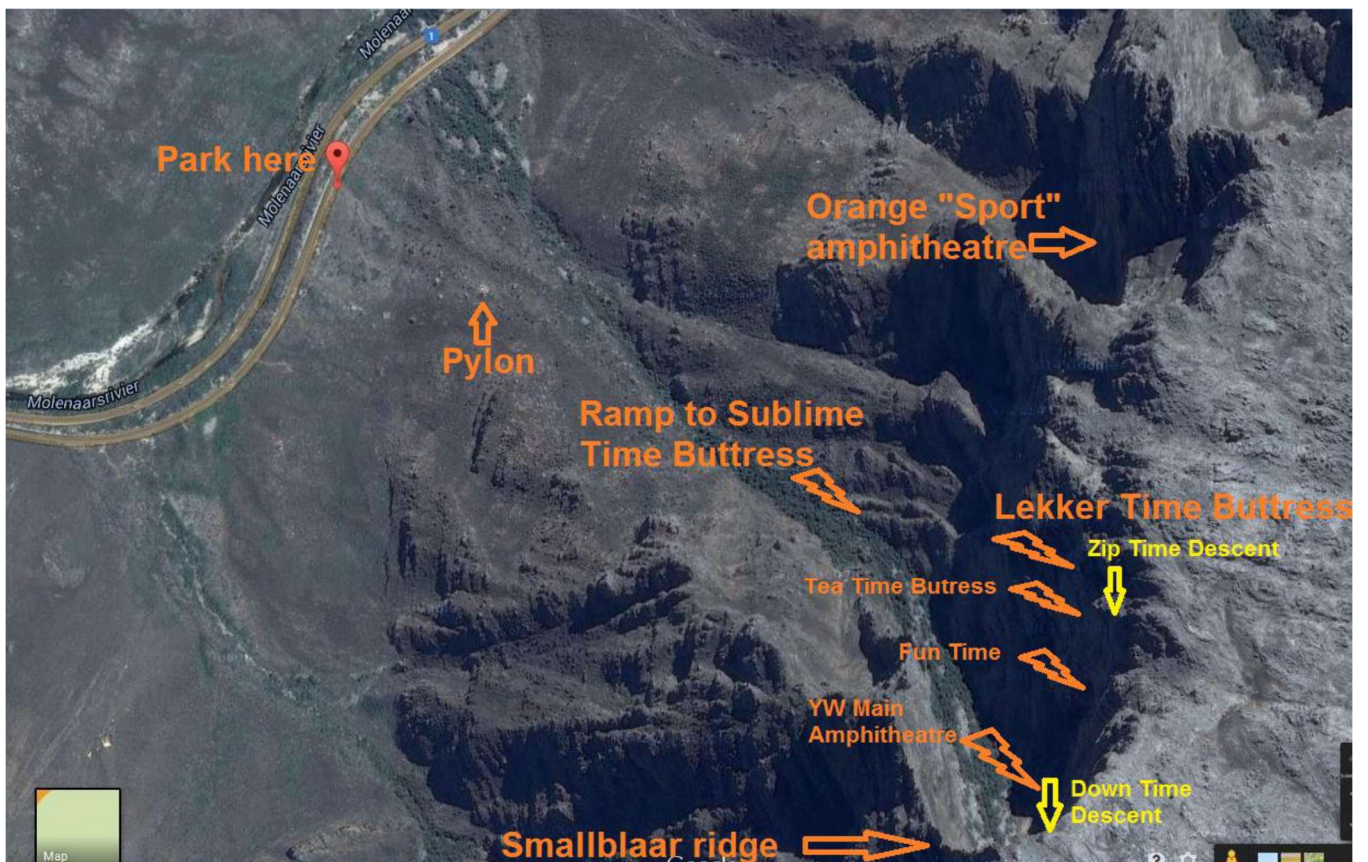
***Du Kloof Lodge sign.***







*After a minute or so you will see the chess pieces high up on the right.*



The first but less favourable option of parking is where the road sweeps left and just past the amphitheatre it curves back right and you will find a dirt track heading off left to the river below. There is parking space for 2 or 3 vehicles but do not obstruct the gate.



### ***Looking back towards Cape Town at the first (secondary) parking place***

From here cross the highway to the far (south side) and walk back about 500m. At first you will be on a concrete shoulder, then you will bypass the drainage channel of the Yellowwood ravine. You will again come to a concrete shoulder and after 50m see a gap in bushes guarded by a large stone cairn.



The better option is to continue till the highway becomes single carriage and carefully do a U turn and start driving back west to Cape Town for exactly 4.1km. When you get your first view of Yellowwood amphitheatre slow down. You will pass a large concrete culvert that drains Yellowwood ravine followed by a grass shoulder. You are within 50m of the parking spot when the shoulder becomes concrete.

GPS: -33.716732, 19.193647.

Pull off before the blue sign and stop just after it. Get your climbing mates out the car and have them direct you to reverse off the concrete shoulder into a small inlet camouflaged by shrubs. A large stone cairn marks the spot. Several cars can park here if they have some ground clearance. Pull completely off the road and of the shoulder too.



Up the slope about 200m away is a large electric pylon. Stop a few metres past the blue sign and reverse off the road and the shoulder onto the side of the road and thereby your vehicle will be less visible.

From time to time police and traffic officials find our vehicles and it causes consternation. So to pre-empt this I leave a note with my mobile phone number and that states the following:

***"To whom it may concern, I am exploring the ravine and the mountains with some friends. I shall be back soon."***

This intervention has resulted in two phone calls from the police where I have allayed their concerns.

## **THE HIKE**

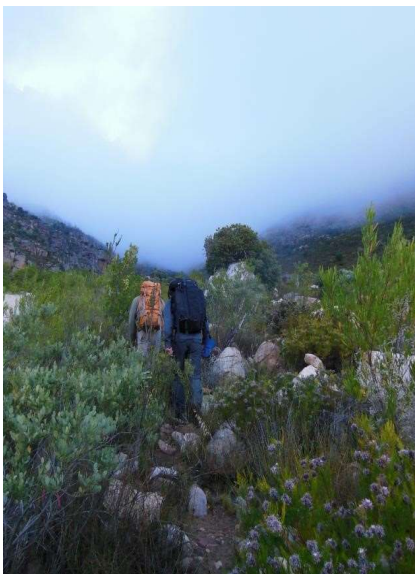
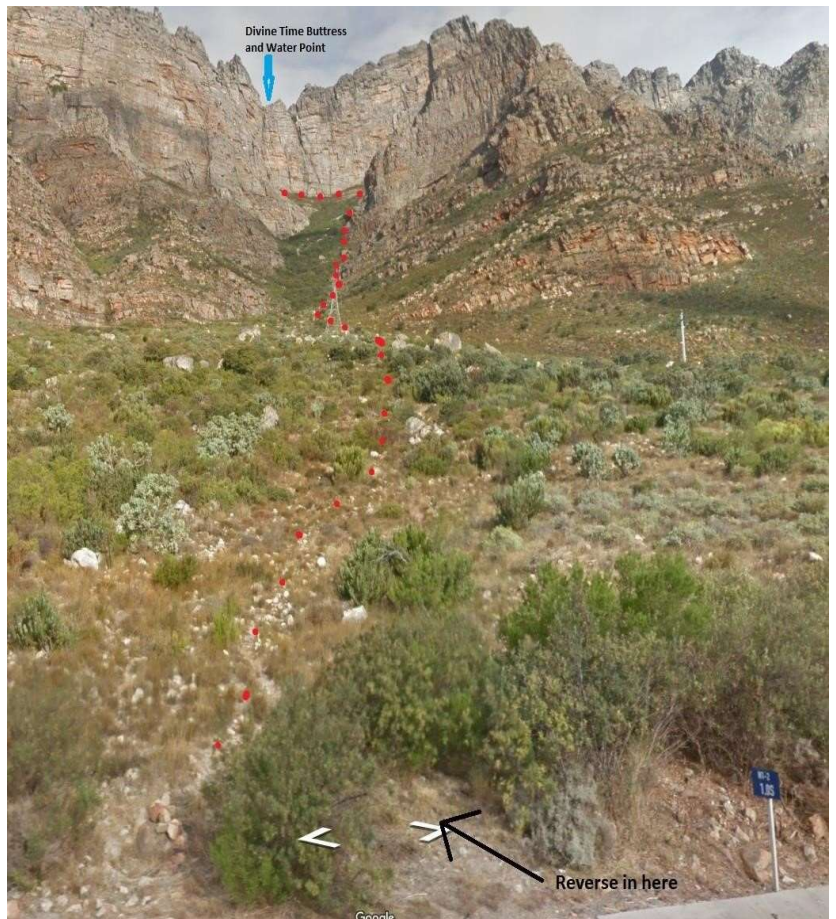
Fire up the Google earth App on your PC or your smart phone and open this link that is zoomed in at the Du Kloof Lodge. Zoom out to see the trail 4km to the east.



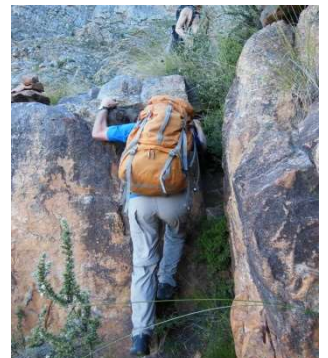


YW Google Earth  
trail.kmz

Follow the cairns to the pylon. Then keep a careful lookout for the trail which is well defined at the time of writing this guide and well-marked with stone cairns the whole way. Landmarks include the following:



5 minutes or so after the pylon you will pass a tree growing out of a rock on the right.



Some 10 minutes later you will cross a small donga (gully) and then a little higher you will need to scramble up a short corner. After continuing a few metres higher you will see a cairn leading into the forest and to a lovely tea spot under the trees whence routes on the



**Sublime Time Buttress** is accessed.

However the trail to the amphitheatre, buttresses and Chess Pieces turns up right here and continues to a boulder scree after a few minutes.



*This Franschoek aloe marks the halfway point (in time) of the hike up and is situated at the start of a short rocky scree. If it takes you 40 minutes to get here from the road then it will usually take another 40 minutes to the Base of the Wall.*



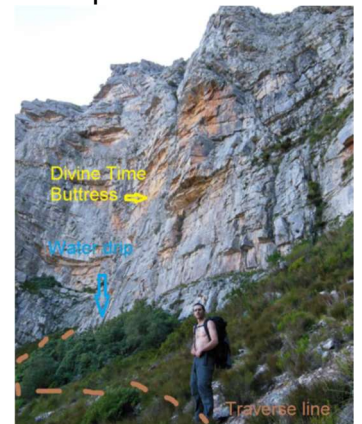
Continue up the scree for about 40m and then head diagonally up left through fynbos past some boulders to eventually enter the forest. From here the trail ducks in and out the forest on its right side – watch for cairns. You will pass the leopard camera and step over the leopard “scratch” tree.

The trail eventually exits out right into the open. This continues steeply for a short while but then you head left to a large boulder scree on the left that you enter between two small yellow woods.

Follow cairns horizontally leftwards over large boulders that then navigate through some yellow wood trees. Diagonal upwards to exit the scree and find a fairly high traverse line that moves horizontally left to the water drip at the base of the Divine Time Buttress.

The **main amphitheatre routes** can be accessed directly by following cairns straight up the boulder scree that then ends around 100m below the base of the amphitheatre. Where it ends look right and you may see a water collection system that consists of plastic buckets. There may be containers filled with water in the grass on the left 2m before the collection system. Take what you need, clean the system if needed and otherwise leave the system as you found it or in better condition. Replenish any of the containers with clean water if feasible. Take down dirty containers

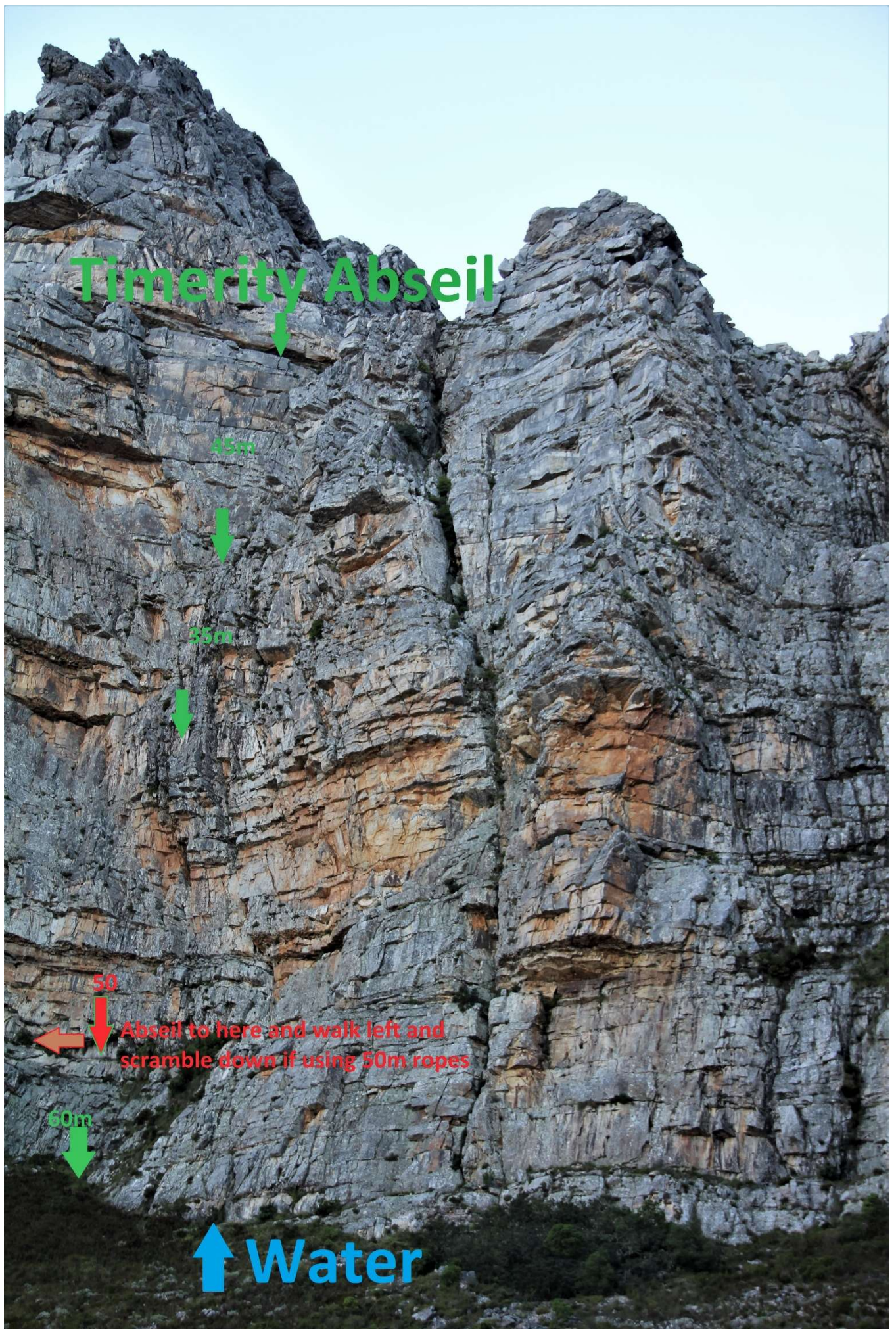
Find your way up to the base of the wall by continuing up diagonally to the left on a loose trail.



# **DESCENTS**

**TIMERITY" ABSEIL 140M**







Timerity Abseil point is fairly easy to find if you orientate yourself before climbing a route. **“Lekker Time”** and **“Adventure Time”** top out near each other just to the **left** of the cave and ledge system with the first **Timerity Abseil point** being situated on the right of the ledge system where the cave ends.

**“Timerity”** and **“Another Fckn Time”** top out about 60m above the cave. From there fairly easy scrambling down a gully on the right (south-east) brings you to more scrambling down a ramp that eventually ends at the **“Timerity” Abseil Point** at the right side of the cave.

The **“Divine Time”** Buttress routes (**“Play Time”**, **“Divine Time”**, **“Time Lapse”**, and **“Outrageous Time”** end less than 50m and just to the right at a slightly higher level than the Timerity Abseil Point.

**“Time after Time”**, **“Good Time”** and **“Tea Time”** also end at a similar level to the **“Timerity Abseil”** and the approach is an easy but careful 5 minute walk along a traverse ledge.

The descent from the **“Extra Time”** buttress depends on what route you do and if you climb the additional 2 pitches (60m) above on the undercut buttress. So the approach to the **Timerity Abseil** is either horizontally for about 200m along the top of the **“Tea Time Buttress”** and then along the **“Divine Time Buttress”** or if you climbed the additional 2 pitches angle down east to descend past the Boulder complex indicated in the photograph and then down

**View looking east from the top of the Main Yellowwood Amphitheatre more or less level with the top of “Fun Time”. Smallblaar top out is about 200m behind you at this point.**



If it is very windy with a significant up-draft, set up an anchor at the large boulders or at the bolted station and lower the first person to the next point. In so doing you will save time and the inconvenience of having your ropes blown away and getting stuck in cracks. An alternative is to weight the ropes with gear and the lower them.

1. Abseil 45m This descends the “plum” 22 pitch of **Timerity**
2. Abseil about 35m or so to the next bolted point which is on the right of the ledge system
3. Abseil to the ground if you have 60m ropes. 50m ropes require you to abseil to a ledge system and then traverse left about 30m and easily scramble down to **Snotter Camp**.



## DOWN TIME ABSEIL

The 'Down Time' Abseil descent is really worth experiencing. It is very exposed and exciting. However it is not the best way to get off the top of Yellowwood unless you are very familiar with it. The Timerity Abseil is far less complicated and faster.

Towards the right hand side of the upper amphitheatre is a massive open book with a grotty looking grey chimney crack system in the corner that ends in a gulley at the top. "Fantastic Time" ascends about 10m left of this system and tops out just left of the gulley. The "Down Time" anchors are on a ledge about 4m below the top about 40m left of the gulley. There is a cairn of Stones at the very top. Look down and search for the bolt anchors that are marked with a piece of blue rope as at May 2017. Scramble safely and easily to the anchor.

It is very useful for escaping from the Halfway Ledge and also if you need to bale off 'Fantastic Time' from whence it can be easily accessed from the top of the first 23 pitch. The top stance of this pitch ends on the same ledge as the anchors for the 3<sup>rd</sup> "Abseil of Down Time". Accessing the abseil anchors require careful roped traversing for about 30m to the left. (East).

Abseil 1: 40m. Straight down, past an overhang. Free-hanging for a bit. When you touch rock again place a cam and clip it to your ropes short. This will get you past the next bulge. The anchors are just beneath the bulge on a blank wall and hanging stance.

Abseil 2: 30m. Two bolts with nice long chains on them take you straight down to a good ledge. As at May 2017 a red rope connects the two points. Use it to pull yourself in. The next anchors are just to the left.

Abseil 3: 50m. 2 bolts equalized with tat and leaver biners. Bring your own extra tat and biners if you're nervous. Straight down to the jumbo halfway ledge. Scramble down 3m to the lower ledge to find the next anchors.

Abseil 4: 62m!!! You cannot get down this abseil with 50m ropes and it is better to go about 70m left and abseil down **Newborn**. SOME 60M ROPES MAY ALSO BE TOO SHORT especially if you tie your ends with long tails. If you are worried then use slings or tat to extend the point by 3 or 4metres or so for the first person to scout it out. The lower bolt has a single chain which is backed up by a maillon to the upper bolt. The maillon cannot be screwed closed. The abseil ends on a small ledge with two bolts

Abseil 5 and 6: 25m Abseil off two bolts equalized with maillons to a station consisting of an equalized hex and nut. Be careful how you thread the rope because it will get stuck if you cock it up. Some 60m ropes will get you to a single bolt to which is attached a short piece of sport rope.

Abseil 7: 10m. Either abseil off the single bolt or hand over hand down the fixed piece of rope and then scramble off to the right from the ledge.

First Descent: Charles Edelstein and Robert Breyer 23 April 2008.

## CHESS PIECES GULLEY

The chess pieces gulley is to the right of the Smalblaar ridge and left of the first Chess Piece. It is easy to find and the descent involves scrambling and several short abseils to the base of the Chess pieces. In rainy season water will flow down the gulley and can make the descent difficult and even hazardous after heavy rain.

Once down walk due north (towards the highway) on a vegetated large ledge system with Smalblaar ridge high up on your right. You will pass a grassy bivy cave and then continue along

with the “gendarme” on your right. Be careful as the ledge system narrows especially in wet weather as this is where there was a fatality in inclement weather some years ago. (Lloyd Turner slipped and fell to his death at this point.)

Continue on to ridge by scrambling over boulders, around the corner and you will see the Main Yellowwood Amphitheatre in all its glory revealed to the East. Contour carefully on descending ledge systems to attain either the base of the wall to retrieve any gear left there or descend on somewhat easier ground to attain the boulder scree that leads to the descent trail.

## YELLOWWOOD WATER

Water is rarely a problem at Yellowwood as there is a source and collection system at the base of the ***Divine Time Buttress*** that provides water for at least 9 months of the year. A bucket water collection and storage system is maintained by local climbers. Always get local knowledge if visiting after December and before good rains start around May.

There are several water sources:

1. There is a delightful cool tea spot next to a stream on the approach to the Sublime Time Buttress. It is found after about 40 minutes’ brisk walking on entering the forest just after doing the short 3m scramble up the right facing corner soon after crossing a small donga. There is a cairn or rather a rock marking the entrance to the forest. Follow cairns into the forest and then down a few metres. Squeeze past a tree and a boulder and then follow cairns ducking under trees for about 30m. If the stream is dry, continue following cairns upstream for about 25m and you will find a sort of cave with a large black barrel that should have water in it.
2. The second spot is about 100m from the base of the main amphitheatre wall on the right where the boulder scree ends. You will see a silver plastic container(s). There will usually be water in these until end December but will be dry until rains come again. Use your common sense to take the water you need, clean out the system if needed and leave it as or in better shape than you found it. There are usually containers, some full and some empty hidden on the left in the grass just before the collection system. If the water is clean, fill empty containers for the next party and place them behind the shady grass. If you find empty containers at the stash at the base of the wall then bring them down when you descend and fill them up too. Carry down dirty or broken containers.
3. The third collection system is at the base of ***Divine Time Buttress*** where there are several containers for collection. **This system is the most reliable.** Again, use common sense so as to preserve water. In the dry season, (January to May ensure that as much water is stored in a bucket with a lid on or in water bottles.
4. There is water flowing as mini-waterfalls after good rains over several days from the ***Tea Time Buttress*** and also down the gully between ***Smalblaar Ridge*** and ***The Castle***.

Please note that rats and rustuses love chewing the plastic bucket lids and water bottle caps. So try and make a plan to prevent them from doing so. Place full bottles in the collection containers if necessary.

## YELLOWWOOD CAMPING

Yellowwood amphitheatre does not lend itself to camping other than an overnight “bivvy”. There are few, not very comfortable sleeping spots and generally not enough water. The best place to

hang-out is at the base of the middle of the wall just to the right of the start of Prime Time direct next a clump of Yellowwood trees which also provide some shade. There is no water there so one has to carry this up from one of the collection systems.

Fires have been made there from time to time on the big white boulder but are not recommended and great care must be taken in the dry months from December to June so as not to set the whole mountain alight.

There are also some more-or-less comfy spots further left (east) near the start of **Newborn**.

There really are no satisfactory sleeping spots at the base of Divine Time buttress adjacent to the water collection system but the base of the **Tea Time Buttress** has some level spots that can be made comfortable.

The best camping spot is way around to the right on the west side of the ridge supporting the **Genderme** and **Smalblaar** but it is about 40minutes walk and hardly worth using unless one is intending to climb on the **Chess Pieces**. There is a cave lined with a grassy floor and there is also water to be found there in the wet season to be found.



**Nick Edelstein age 10 at the "bivvy" Jan 2010**

If one intends to do a major route at Yellowwood one can walk up in the evening starting around 90 minutes before dark and then "bivvy" at the base of Prime Time Direct. Water can be collected from one of the water collection systems on the side and depending on how hot it is 3 -5l per person should be adequate to rehydrate and for the next day climbing. If you come down from a route dehydrated, you can always tank up at the water collection system on the way down.





# THE SNOTTER CAMP

Over time various individuals and parties have deemed it fit to stash gear, water and food at or near the base of the amphitheatre or the various buttresses so as to obviate the need to carry heavy packs to the base of the routes. Should they find them visitors are kindly requested to view these stashes as “private property” as is the whole of the ravine. Use of this gear without permission is considered theft by the owners. There is usually a stash of gear at the **Divine Time** water point and this may not be used without permission from the author. There are emergency supplies available there including some first aid stuff, cooking gear, some food and snacks and the like in the small yellow barrel with the red lid. Visitors are welcome to avail themselves of whatever they critically need but please inform the author (Snort) of any usage by sms and email and make plans to replace any stuff used. If you feel compelled to use any climbing gear then please first get permission and before using it take a photograph of the gear followed by a photograph later on as gear is frequently lost inadvertently. ANY gear damaged or lost needs to be replaced with similar brand and quality gear. So please do not use any gear that is not easily available in South Africa.

The small blue barrel is out of bounds and holds private gear

Anyone that does use the gear is required to donate R300.00 per annum to the Cape Town MCSA trad fund.

Yellowwood is to say the least a very adventurous place where accidents have and will continue to happen. Abusing any private property or the privilege of climbing there may result in considerable reluctance to assist any individual should they run into trouble.

## ROUTE DESCRIPTIONS.

### BLACK WATERFALL FACE “F” 17

**Start:** Walk up the trail and as soon as you have done the short scramble as described continue a few metres higher and then walk into the forest where a cairn marks the entrance. Weave more or less horizontally to a delightful shady tea spot at the stream (that is seasonal). Follow cairns left and up to exit the forest.

Scramble up the rib to where the rock buttress steepens. Then head left to the gully as described in the route description.



FA K Fletcher and R Williams 1965



## Black Waterfall Face

A New Route on the de la Bat Ridges, Du Toit's Kloof

R. F. WILLIAMS

We sat huddled under a tree while a very damp mist, almost like rain, swirled about us. I was convinced that there are such things as mountain gremlins, who were determined on this occasion that we should not put foot to rock! It was the fourth time I had come to Yellowwood Ravine<sup>1</sup> with the intention of climbing a prominent red face, with a black streak running down its centre, situated between The Red Ridge and Yellowwood Ravine. In 1963, I had managed to climb three pitches with Barry Fletcher, but we had been turned back by water on the rock; on the three subsequent attempts the weather had been foul.

We managed to talk ourselves into thinking that by the time we reached the rock the weather would have cleared, and so we headed up the slope roughly in the direction we thought the face lay. It so happened that our course was right, and without undue delay we reached the foot of the rock. As the mist was thicker than ever, a good wet mist, we decided to wait. Keith Fletcher, my companion, soon dropped off into a sound but noisy slumber. After an hour or so, we decided to retreat and began descending the little rock scramble below the foot of the face proper. I felt the rock, it was dry; I looked at Keith whose expression clearly said 'Let's go!', and before we could change our minds we were climbing.

With visibility down to about 25 feet, we comforted ourselves with the thought that at least the mist prevented us from seeing the overhangs above and also the drop below! As we climbed swiftly on, the sun broke through and the mist slowly melted away. The climb was not as difficult as we had expected, but provided us with three hours of fine climbing.

Once on top, we met Joan and Brian Quail who had decided not to climb owing to the weather, and together we descended the Yellowwood Ravine 'B' route up which they had recently come.

### Technical Description

The route is approached by ascending Yellowwood Ravine until one is high enough to branch out to the left on to the ridge leading to the foot of the face. The route lies to the right of the prominent black streak.

- (1) 20 feet 'C': Climb a recess to a stance at the foot of the face proper.

<sup>1</sup> 1962 M.C.S.A. Journal, p. 63

## BLACK WATERFALL FACE

125

- (2) 120 feet 'D': Descend and then traverse to the right to a tree.
- (3) 70 feet 'F inf.': Climb up above the tree and handswing around a large block to the right, then climb up 10 feet to a small stance.
- (4) 60 feet 'E inf.': Continue straight up for 60 feet to a ledge.
- (5) 110 feet 'F inf.': Climb up the face, bearing slightly to the left and then to the right. The finish lies up a short layback crack that leads to a large ledge.
- (6) 100 feet 'E sup.': Continue up the face immediately above.
- (7) 100 feet 'F': Ascend the recess lying slightly to the left, and then move out to the right underneath the overhang and continue up the face to a ledge.
- (8) 110 feet 'F': Continue up the face, then move slightly to the left and break through the overhang by climbing a recess. Proceed diagonally up to the right to a large ledge.
- (9) 110 feet 'F inf.': Climb the face immediately behind the stance, traverse to the left on an obvious ledge, then ascend 20 feet to a stance near a large bush.
- (10) 60 feet 'E sup.': Traverse to the left into a recess, then move to the left and climb up to a stance.
- (11) 70 feet 'E': Continue climbing straight up above the stance to the top.

Party: Keith Fletcher and R. Williams.

Date: September 12, 1965.

Time: Three hours on the rock.



## NOT THE BEST TIME 19\*\*

Start: Walk up the trail and as soon as you have done the short scramble as described continue a few metres higher and then walk into the forest where a cairn marks the entrance. Weave more or less horizontally to a delightful shady tea spot at the stream (that is seasonal). Follow cairns left and up to exit the forest.

Scramble up the rib to the left to where the rock buttress steepens.

**Pitch 1:** 35m 19 Find your way up the front of the buttress on clean grey rock to a stance

**Pitch 2:** 35m 19 Continue up the clean grey rock with the odd tricky move to a stance.

**Pitch 3:** 40m 19+ Climb towards the overhang on dodgy rock, skirt it on the right and do tricky moves just above the lip to the left. Continue up to ledge on chossy rock.

**Pitch 4:** 25m 19 Climb the overlap on gnarly rock to a lower off if you can find it. Or continue finding your way up to the ridge

FA Ascent C Edelstein and B Daniel Mid 2014

# SUBLIME TIME CRAG

Tony Dick, Neels Havenga, Deon Van Zyl, Bruce Daniel and I recently (Mid 2014) developed the **Sublime Time Buttress** on the West facing buttress of the lower **Yellowwood Ravine**. We are not the first party to explore that crag. In 1981 Mike Scott with Peter De Tolly and John Moss did the "Red Waterfall route" at "F" grade. **Sublime Time** is the plum route there but all the climbing is excellent with the top red face providing 5 star quality. The routes are 140 to 160m long and can be done in 4 or 5 pitches. There is a very user friendly abseil descent on the right that may require replacement of the "tat", preferably with stainless steel chain. All the points entail threads and there is no fixed gear. Download high res photos on a smart phone and use it as a route guide as you climb by magnifying the picture to see the detail!.

The approach starts at the same place from the N1 as the other Yellowwood routes. Continue to the Pilon. Walk another 20 minutes or so passing through a shallow gully and then soon after there is a short corner scramble of around 3m. Continue up and left for about 30m and spot a cairn adjacent to the forest. Once in the forest go down and left behind a boulder, squeeze past a tree and then head up left for about 30m following cairns. Have tea at the stream. If it is dry go up about 20-30m and find a black barrel with water. Follow cairns diagonally out left over large white boulders and continue up the broken grey ramp for around 250m until at the base of the routes. Stay on the clean grey rock slabs and avoid the loose gullies on each side.

**Sublime Time** is the route to do but once you do the 19 pitch rap off and do the 20 pitch on the right. It is superb. You have plenty of time to do **Some Time** as well in a normal day if it is not too hot and you will end up having done 320m (1000ft) or so of excellent moderate climbing.





## RED FACED WATERFALL ROUTE F2

**Start:** Walk up the trail and as soon as you have done the short scramble as described continue a few metre higher and then walk into the forest where a cairn marks the entrance. Weave more or less horizontally to a delightful shady tea spot at the stream (that is seasonal). Follow cairns left and up to exit the forest.

As for all the Sublime Time routes scramble up the right grey rib of rock for 120m or so to where it steepens at a long wide ledge. E3. (Most people would prefer a rope here and there.)

**Pitch 1:** F1. Climb diagonally right across some shiny slabs.

**Pitch 2:** F1 Continue after an awkward start in a recess to a stance.

**Pitch 3:** E1 A pitch up the shattered pillar on the corner leads to a long ledge which can be traversed right into the top of Yellowwood ravine.

**Pitch 4:** F1 An undercut start on the left leads right into a steep broken recess of reddish rock. At the long overhang traverse left onto a ledge.

**Pitch 5:** F2 Around the corner on the left fight your way through a tree into a chimney crack and climb this to the top. Or climb the slab above the ledge (F3).

**Descent:** Walk right along the ledge to the abseil point.

First Ascent: John Moss, Peter De Tolley and Mike Scott. 1981

***Andi Tromp belaying Dion Tromp on Red Waterfall Face. Photo: Mike Scott***

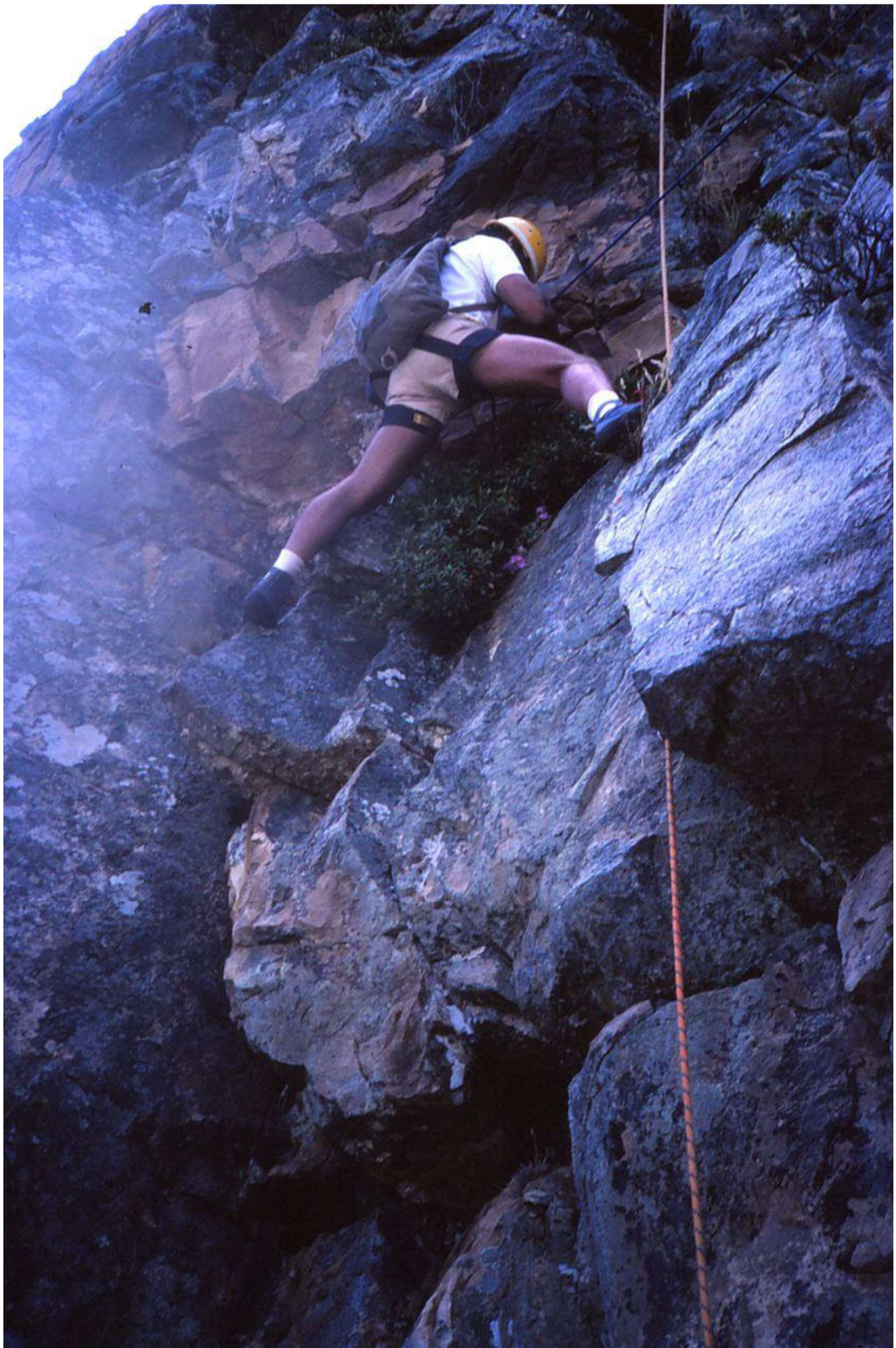






***Dion Tromp leading on Red Faced Waterfall route. Photo: Mike Scott***





***Peter De Tolley on the crux of Red Faced Waterfall route. Picture: Mike Scott***







## **QUALITY TIME 140M 16 \*\*\*\*\***

First Ascent: Charles Edelstein and Margaret Milne October 2017

## **SOME TIME 140M 20 \*\*\*\***

First Ascent: Charles Edelstein, Tony Dick and Bruce Daniel November 2014

## **SUBLIME TIME 150M 19 OR 20 \*\*\*\*\***

First Ascent: Charles Edelstein and Deon van Zyl October 2014

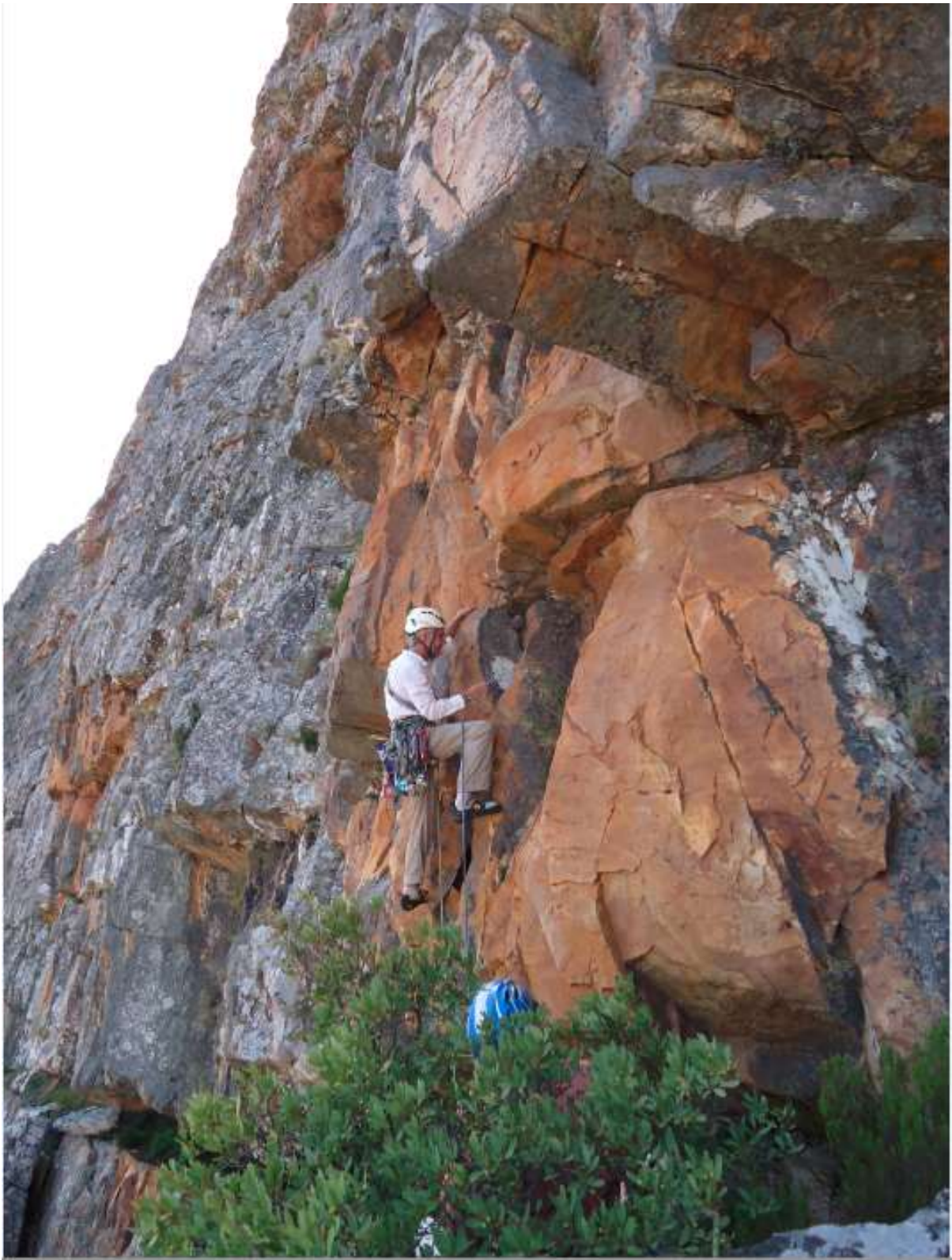
## **TRIVIAL TIME 160M 16 \*\*\***

First ascent: Charles Edelstein, Tony Dick and Bruce Daniel, November 2014



*A silly grin from Deon on Sublime Time October 2014: Photo C Edelstein*





***Tony Dick setting off on the final pitch of "Some Time" 19. Nov 2014. Photo C Edelstein***





***Bruce Daniel cranking through the crux of Sublime Time. Nov 2014. Photo C Edelstein***



# SMALL TIME CRAG



**Small Time**, so named because it has only one pitch routes, is situated on the right side (west side) of Yellowwood ravine and is noticeable by the striking left facing corner ("**Classic Corner**") visible from the approach trail just before exiting the trail to traverse the boulder scree. This is about 15 minutes short of reaching the main amphitheatre. 4 new routes were established by Charles Edelstein and David Webster on the 9 February 2016. They are all excellent quality on good rock that is not typical of the Main Wall or East Buttress routes. The rock is more compact and similar to Cederberg rock.

**"Not Much Time" 21** is excellent and varied with a steep airy finish.

**"A Bit more Time" 22** has a boulder start and then a hard move from the first rail if you are short – more like 23 than 22.

**"Small Time"** is superb and solid 19.

**"Classic Corner" 19m** is quite a serious lead unless you have a No 4 Camelot.

The crag gets early sun so nice in winter and if you have limited time. It also gets early afternoon shade so if you have done one of the East Buttress routes and have "A Bit more Time", then these routes can provide a more fulfilling day.

Descent is best by abseiling off the obvious tree although there is no fixed point there now. There is also a very obvious prong about 5metres right of the tree that can be used as a convenient temporary point.

Walking off is possible by first going up a few metres and then left but requires doing one tricky move.

The routes are all a few metres less than 30m.

## LEKKER TIME 17 \*\*\*\*(\*)

View the photo topo. The route starts about 100m left and down from the Divine Time Buttress. The first three pitches ascends the front of a 90m buttress to a promontory that is easily identifiable from the rocky scree on the walk-up from where it is best to inspect the route. The buttress is also defined from the tea spot at the start of Divine Time. The route then diagonals left up a lichen covered face in 2 pitches to where it steepens. The 6<sup>th</sup> pitch climbs steep rock to below large overhangs and the final pitch sneaks through an overlap and the diagonals up right to the walk off "cave".

"Lekker Time" is probably the best introductory route to Yellowwood for moderate level climbers. It involves interesting problem solving climbing that is easy to access and the descent is easy to find and close by to the top-out. Although the grade is only 17 it nevertheless requires considerable trad climbing experience to negotiate safely. The route is mostly steep with little chance of a ground fall except, possibly, at the start of pitch 3 that requires some careful foot work and judicious gear placement. Pitch 5 denies the route a full 5 star rating and requires ***strict adherence to the route description to avoid chossy and dodgy rock***. One feels uninclined to commit to climbing the very steep intimidating lichen covered rock heading up leftwards but the holds are positive and clean, the gear placements excellent and the rock quality much better than it looks.

The name is apt because that is what you are likely to experience, a "lekker" (cool) time. It is therefore an enjoyable route for more advanced climbers to do with their less able partners or friends.

The route can be climbed all year and will dry quickly after rain, within 48 hours. As it is west facing it is shady all morning which can be very cold in later winter and autumn. However, in summer, it is in shade longer than all the other routes on the East Buttresses which is desirable on a very hot day.

**Pitch 1:** 40m (16) Start off some boulders below a small orange face capped by a narrow overhang. Climb up to the overhang and do a crank through. Continue easily tending left to stay on clean rock out of the bushy cracks to a good ledge below a short steep yellow face.

**Pitch 2:** 20m (17) Climb the short face and find your way more or less straight up to a left facing recess capped by an overhang. Step up under the overhang and place a bomber small nut protects the next move. Search for a small but good hold up high round the overhang for your left hand and step round right onto the arete. Continue to a ledge with blocks under a large overhang. (The "small hold" move can be avoided by fighting your way past a yellow wood tree on the left.)

**Pitch 3:** 25m (17) Climb up and head carefully right to the arete. Climb till you are level with the overhang. Make a fist jamb move and continue more easily to a large ledge and belay at the base of a massive block. You are now on top of the pillar.

**Pitch 4:** 25m (16) Move your belay by walking around to the back of the block on its right. Climb up and head diagonally left first on cleanish grey rock but heading for the darker lichen covered rock. Find somewhere to stance after about 25m as pitch 4 and 5 combined is 70m.

**Pitch 5:** 40m (17) Climb carefully on gnarly lichen covered rock (but positive holds) heading left at almost 45 degrees! Do not be tempted to go straight up as it is chossy. Stance at the obvious ledge below a right facing corner system.

**Pitch 6:** 45m (17) Climb 3m or so carefully on juggy holds but swing left 2 metres or so before the overlap above. Going straight up is harder but there is a medium size cam placement above you that you may want to use before stepping left. Once you place the cam reverse a move or



two and then swing left. Continue up excellent rock on clean steep juggy cracks to belay before the final overhangs on a large block.



**Pitch 7:** 30m (16)  
Climb up and right to the notch. Crank up and then move left to a point where the overhang is at its smallest. Be careful about using extenders on your pro so as to not incur drag. Climb up and then diagonal right to the skyline on the grey ramp. (Easy). Continue up the crack and find your way to a grassy ledge.

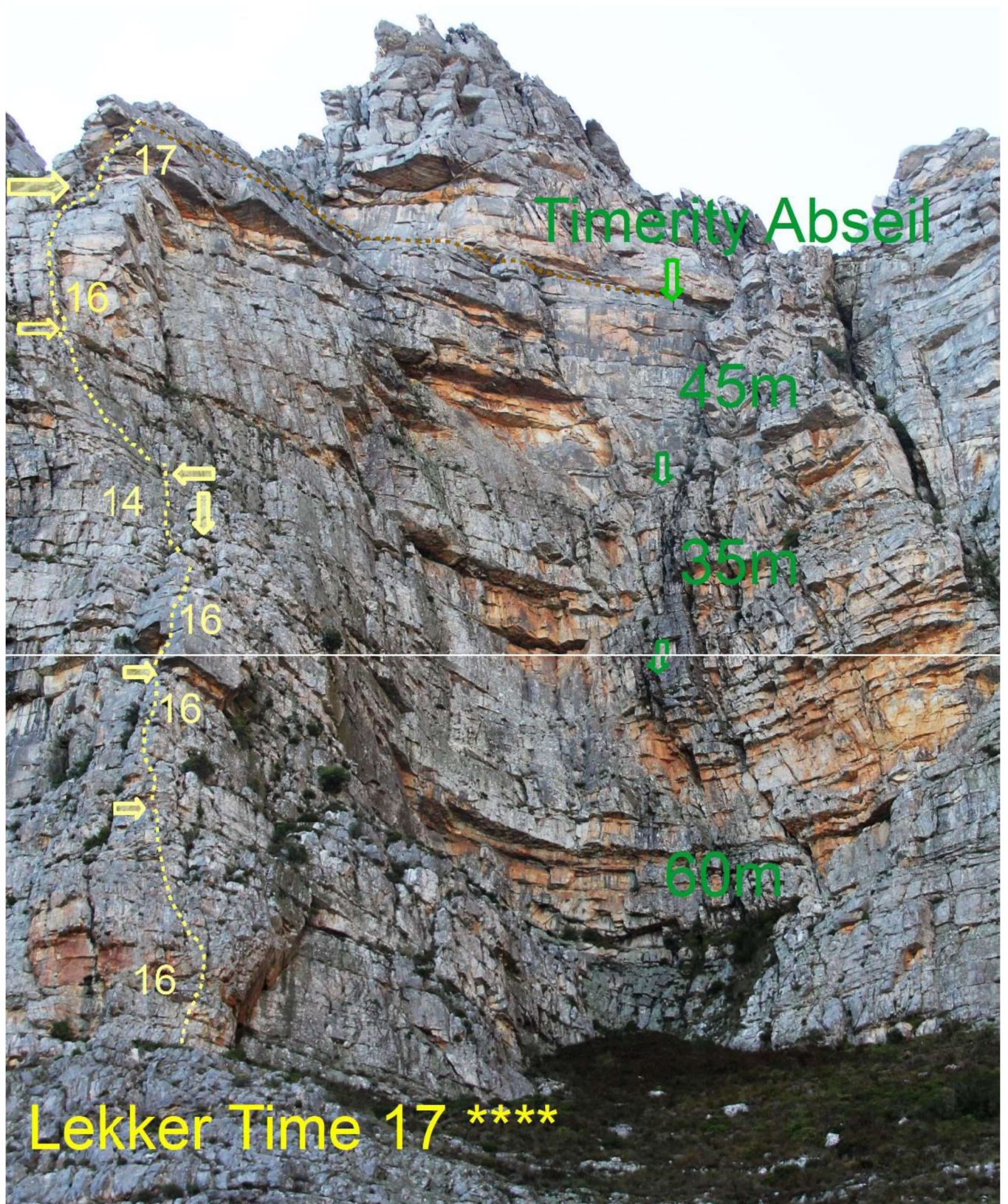
FA: C Edelstein,  
Deon Van Zyl April  
2014

**Descent:**  
“*Timerity Abseil*” descent is a few minutes away. . It consists of 3 or 4 elegant and safe abseils.

Walk right (south-west) down the grassy sloping ledge to where the ledge is capped by a huge overhang forming a low cave. Where the overhang ends look down to see a grey square shaped flat block where the bolted abseil point is marked by a red piece of rope connected to a peg.

**Deon Van Zyl on the first ascent starting the 3<sup>rd</sup> pitch.** Photo C Edelstein









***Margaret Milne on the 6<sup>th</sup> pitch of Lekker Time enjoying sunshine after a very cold start. May 2014. Photo: Charles Edelstein***





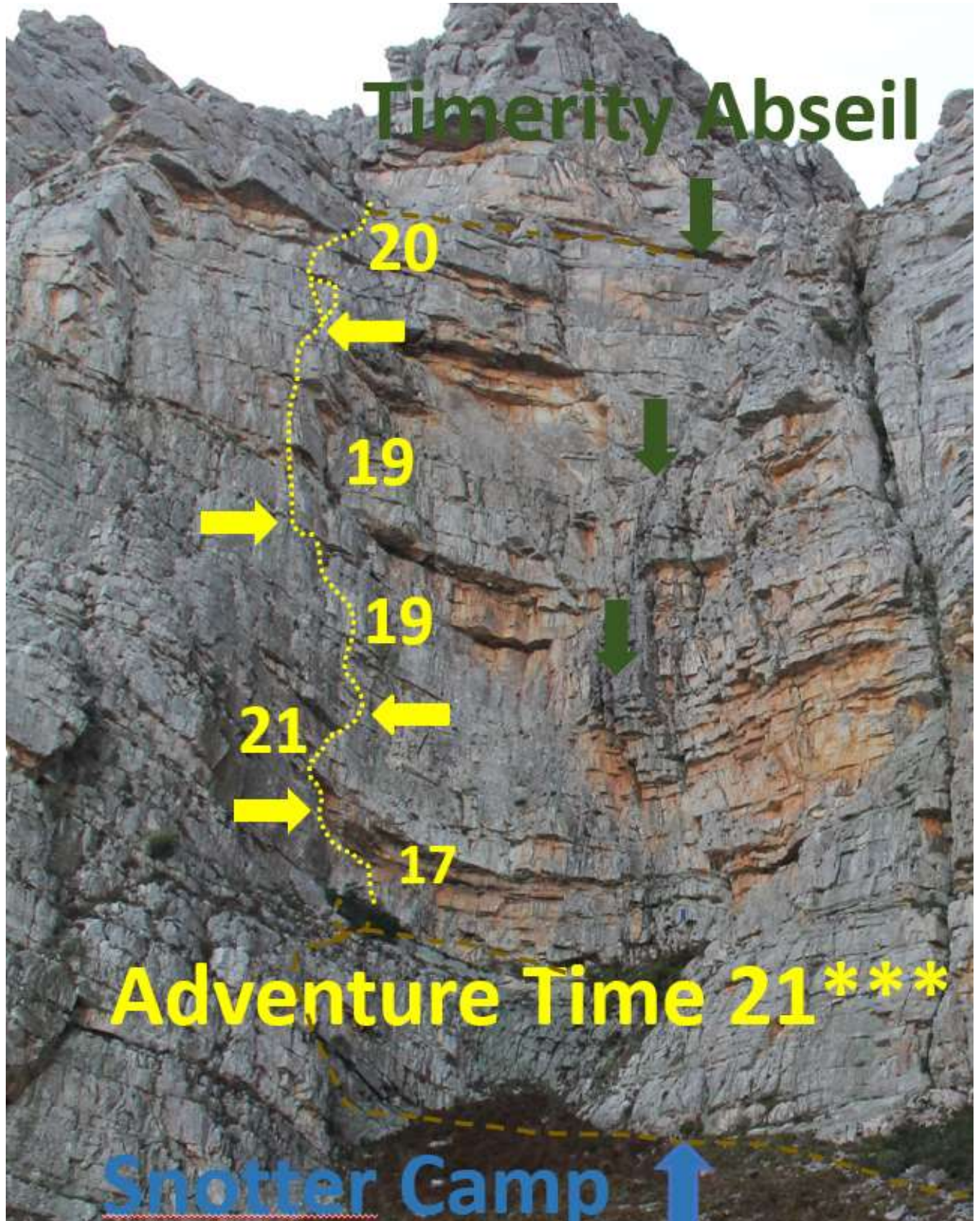
***Charles Edelstein just past the crux on the final pitch of Lekker Time: Photo Deon Vanyl***



***Duncan Edelstein chilling atop of Lekker Time January 2017: Photo: C Edelstein***



**ADVENTURE TIME 150m 20 \*\*\***







**Start:** Scramble up 150m or so in the bowl between the **Snotter camp** and **Lekker Time**. Start just left of the large clump of yellow wood trees or clamber straight up to the base of the crack.

**Pitch 1:** 25m 17 Avoid a fight through the yellow woods by starting high up to the left and traverse right to the obvious crack in the recess. Or start directly at the base of the crack. Continue up to the overhang and traverse back left to a good stance.



**Pitch 1:** 25m 21 Climb up the grey rock using the pockets to start and then a thin move up right to the rail. Move left up the rail and crank through the pinch in the overhang. Continue to a small overhang and exit it on the right. Climb to a good stance on block marked by a cairn

**Pitch 3:** 30m 19. Head up the large cammed block above. Move out left and then straight up clean rock to where it becomes chossy. Skirt the choss on the left and then come back right to the overhang directly above the stance. Climb past right and into the shallow recess. Tend left to easier ground. Then traverse easily left to a stance and belay off the horn.

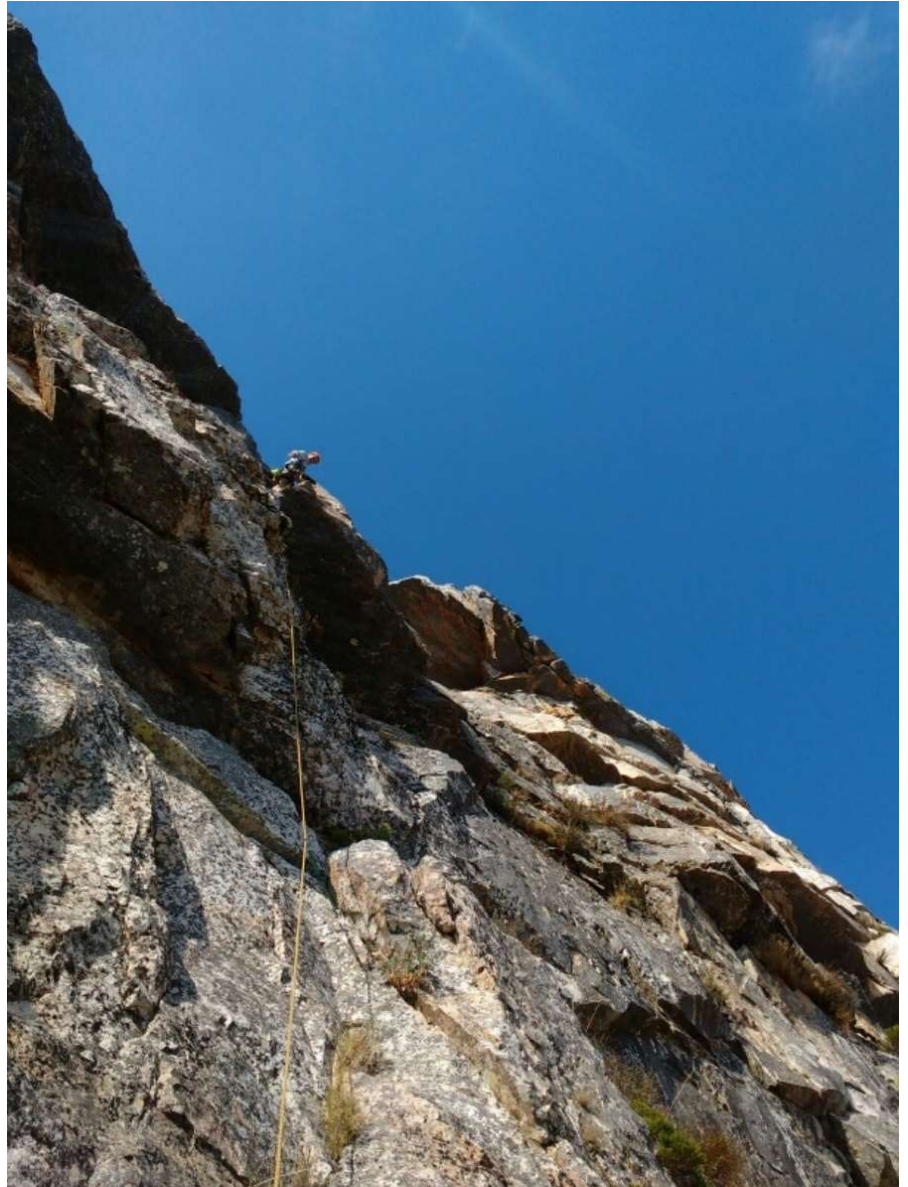
**Pitch 4:** 45m 19 Find your way up to the steep yellow overhanging section visible above. Crank through and continue up to the next overlap. Crank through this and then tend diagonally left to a good stance.

**Pitch 5:** 35m 20. Find your way up to the huge overhang above by first climbing up to the right and then moving left at the rail. (Or have a go at climbing directly up but looks run-out and chossy with lichen.) Move back easily right to a small black recess. Place an excellent micro-cam. Stem up and then out to the right. Pass an overlap and continue tending right up to the walk off ledge. Tree belay

**Descent:** The [Timerity abseil](#) is about a rope length to your right at the end of the cave.

**Gear:** Standard rack with one or two micro cams. Take an extra no 1 or no 2 Camelot for comfort on the stance at the start of pitch 2.

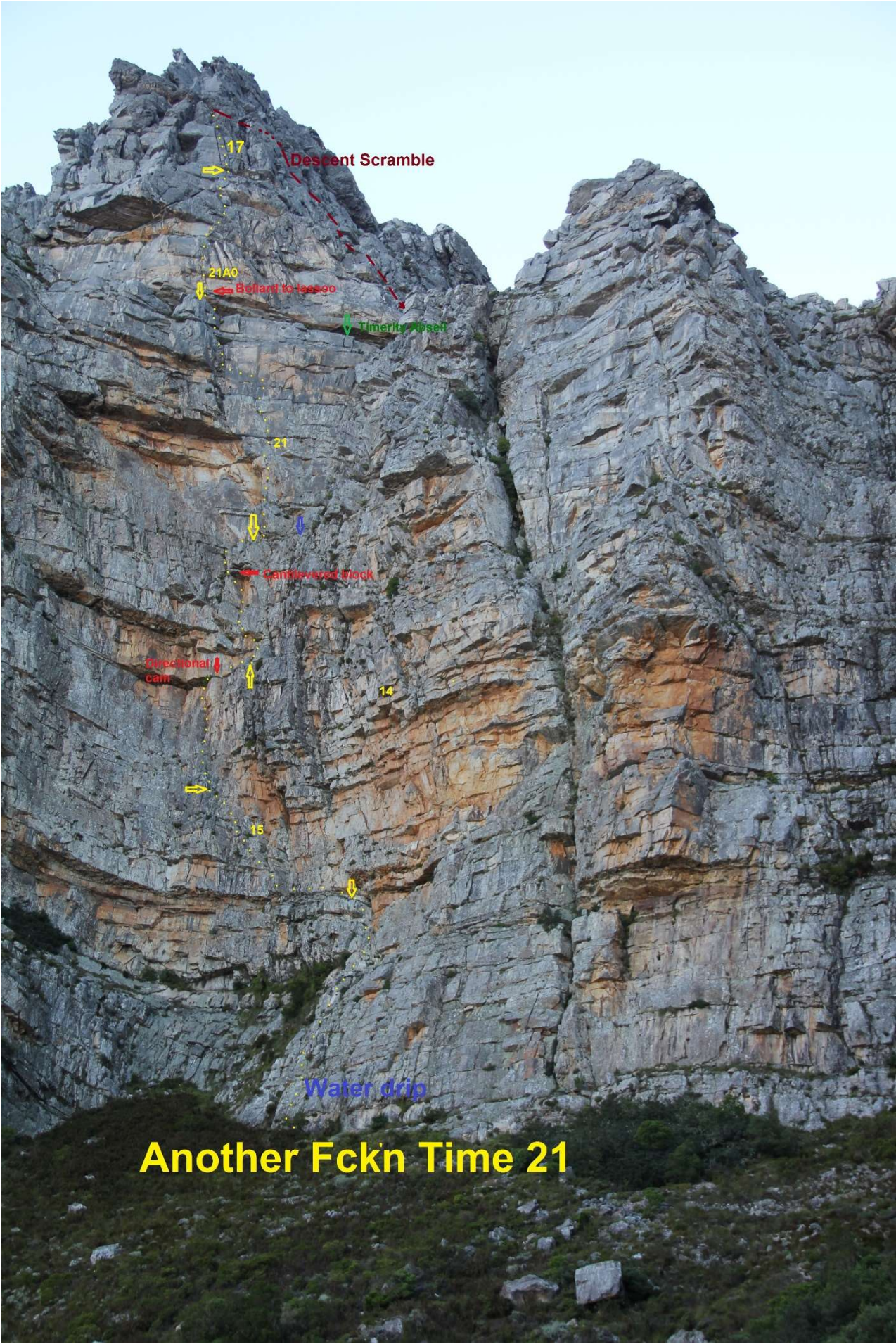
**FA:** Charles Edelstein and James Barclay, 26 April 2017



***Charles Edelstein on the final 20 pitch of Adventure time  
FA: 26 April 2017. Photo: James Barclay***



**ANOTHER FCK'N TIME 220m 21\*\*\*\*\***







**Bruce Daniel and Deon Van Zyl following pitch 3 on the first ascent.** Photo C Edelstein

What is by far the most obvious and impressive panel of rock on the yellowwood **East Buttresses** is what enticed me to investigate new route potential here initially. It is a large upside down triangular face that on reasonably close inspection from various angles seemed to be devoid of a continuous line. It seemed that the only way to actually test the possibility of finding a way up the face would be to abseil down it and inspect it on top-rope. However, this is never a satisfactory way of route finding and it denies the first ascensionist the reward of the on-sight. So armed with a good climbing rack and lots of optimism I cajoled and bullied my buddies Deon and Bruce to join me in finding a way up this most alluring piece of rock.

The route starts at the water drip and climbs easy grey rock to the large ledge system shared with **Play Time**. It continues up left, again on easy rock to a stance that Deon led. The third pitch continues up a crack system on quality rock that I led.

Then Deon found a way up to a stance a few metres below the triangular panel which also was relatively straight forward. Then came the panel (the word “headwall” is a tad too dramatic!). It starts with a steep overhanging crack that required momentarily hanging on a cam to pull out a bush and then continued up a short and steep pillar followed by one of the most stunning pitches I have ever done as a first ascent. It seemed very intimidating but as I moved up, interesting and challenging moves unfolded that were well protected. The pitch is a full 60m of brilliant climbing and ends in the undercut cave above which rears another large buttress.

We considered finding a way up the buttress above but there was no way we could get off the ground. I noticed a bollard around 5m up and with a flick of the rope lassoed it first time. But heat and weariness sent us scuttling home.

Some 8 months later in January 2014 I climbed **Lekker Time** with Tony Dick. We were done just after 12pm and I decided to have another look at climbing the final buttress. It took more than 10 attempts to lasso the bollard and we then climbed 2 very good pitches to the top. The first pitch is steep and tricky. While the last pitch is more forgiving. From there it was an easy scramble down to the rappel level.

This route is as much deserving of 5 stars as any at Yellowwood. It is also longer than the other buttress routes and well over 200m in height.

**Pitch 1:** 45m 15 Starting at the water point and stash, find your way up the cleanest rock to stance on the first good ledge or continue another 4m to stance on a higher ledge system (common with Timerity.)

**Pitch 2:** 25m 15 Traverse low on good juggy rock to a stance next to a grey pillar on your left.

**Pitch 3:** 35m 18 Climb up leftwards up the grey ramp to attain a recess with lighter coloured rock. At the top step left out of the recess and continue to a “dassie” cave. Step out right and place a good directional cam in a “post-box” slit in the upper lip of the rock above the “Dassie” cave. Move right and belay past a large block leaning against the wall.



**Pitch 4:** 25m 20 Move up and left to an overlap and pull through it on the left on dodgy appearing but well tested rock. Continue into the recess above topped by a large cantilevered block. Climb past the block on its left to a stance.

**Pitch 5:** 60m 21 From the ledge crank into a narrow recess on the right. Continue up the front of the pillar above. At the top of the pillar continue straight up to the left leaning crack system. Climb this till it runs out and then move left on a ledge system to the vegetated corner. Climb this to the stance in the massive cave.

**Pitch 6:** 25m 21 A0 or massive reach move. At the cairn look up to see a bollard on the wall 4m above. Lasso it with the rope and aid or climb up to it. Do strenuous moves and move through the narrow gap of the roof a bit to the left. Continue more easily to a good stance.

**Pitch 7:** 25m 17 Climb the juggy rock to stance.

**Descent:** Scramble down the gulley to the right till it opens up. Keep scrambling down moving left facing out on relatively easy rock to the scree even though it seems quite tricky difficult. Once at the scree the **Timerity abseil** is just below you to your right.

First ascent : Pitches 1 to 5 C Edelstein, Bruce Daniel and Deon Van Zyl, April 2014.

Pitches 6 and 7 C Edelstein and Tony Dick 7 January 2015.

FFA pitch 6: Willem (Pecs) Le Roux (Tall-man)

## **ZEITGEIST 160M 25 \*\*\*\*\***

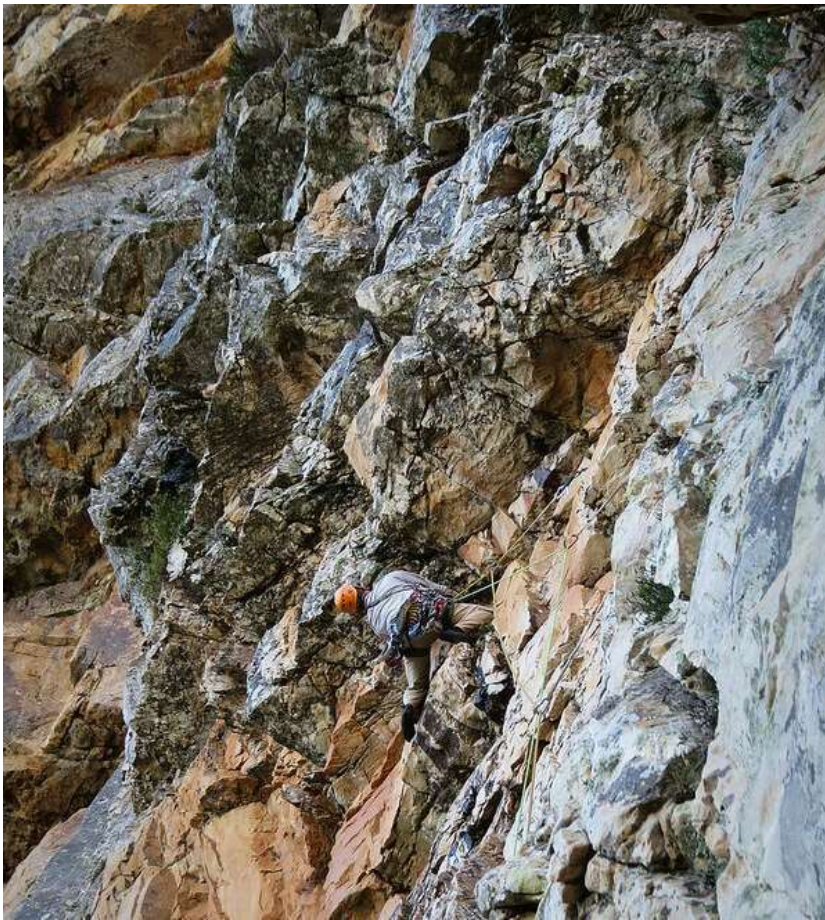
It was the triangular panel on the **Timerity Buttress** that attracted me to the **East Buttresses** above **Yellowwood ravine** in the first place and my ambition was to fire a pitch straight through the middle of it. When I did the first ascent of **Another Fck'n Time** the headwall pitch stymied climbing directly through and I was forced off to the left. I could not for the life of me see a way through at the point where one moves left on the headwall. The **Timerity pitch** on the right flank is one of the best climbing pitches anywhere but also did not quite strike through the middle. But then I noticed a weakness between the two routes some years ago and I fiddled around on a top-rope and realized that the middle of the headwall would go. There was a short 5m crux section that I failed to work out at the time.

In March this year young Luke Eberhard got off route trying to climb the **Timerity** headwall pitch and was stranded at the crux for what seemed hours. I could see him from afar where I was climbing **Prime Time Direct** with Madeleine Sorkin, one of the visiting Americans on the 2017 **AAC/MCSA exchange meet**. Jimbo Smith and Maury Birdwell, (another one of the Americans) had just completed in fine, quick style a free ascent of **Show Time 25** and tossed young Luke a rope. He then proceeded to complete the pitch claiming that he actually managed to free all the moves – something I was not made aware of at the time.

On 3 September the plan was to go and drink tea with my OBF Jimbo and my NBF Garreth at Yellowwood and then consider a pleasant day climbing in the sun on either **African Time or Judgment Day. The Second Coming**, Tony Dick and Dave Davies two thirds route from the eighties also needed a relook.

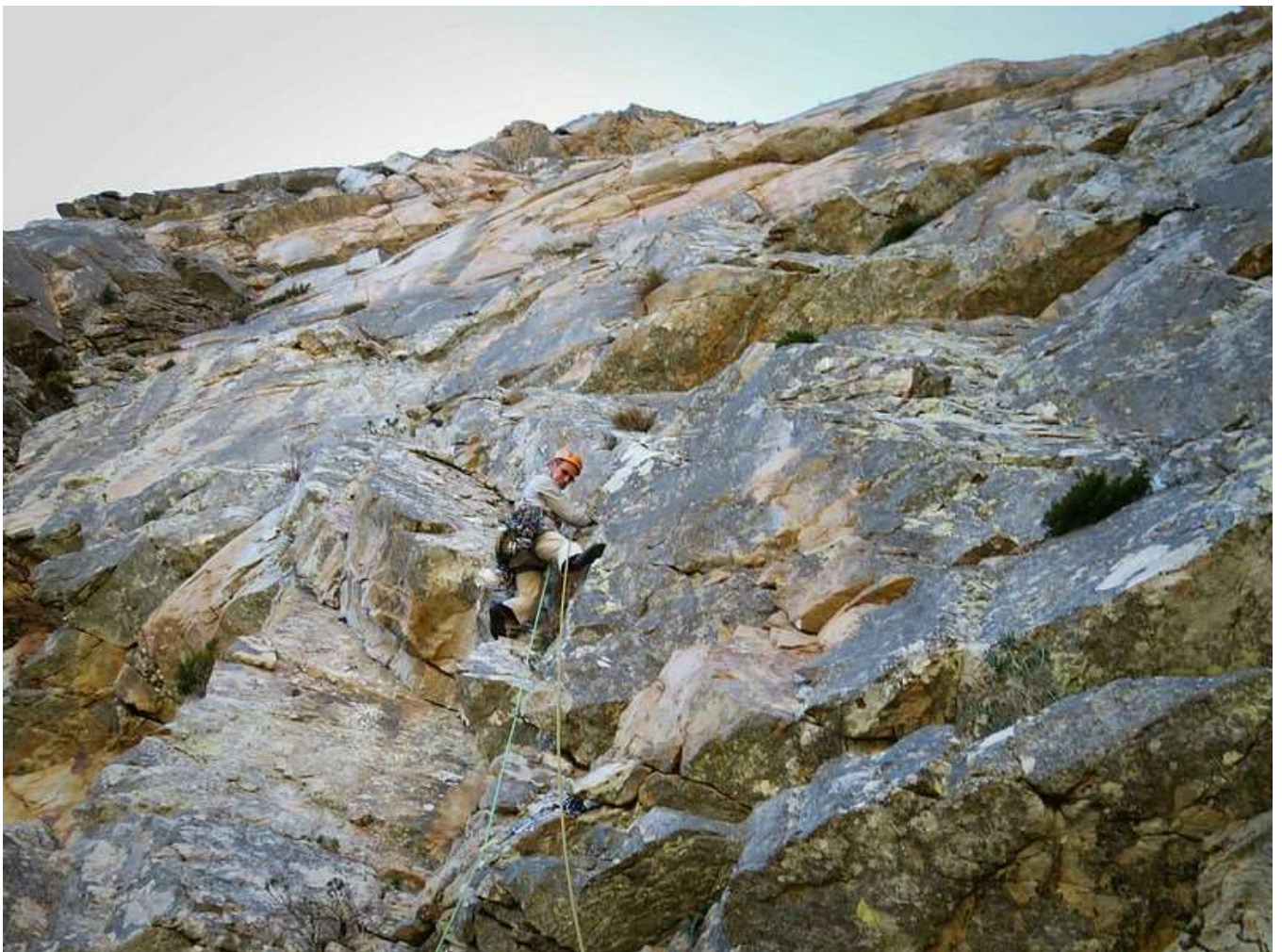
However, when we got there it was too warm to consider climbing in the sun and in perfect temperature I thought that we could fashion a new route between **Timerity** and **Another Fck'n Time**. And by golly, so we did. Well almost.





***Snort on the 2<sup>nd</sup> pitch of Zietgeist 18. Photo Garreth Bird***

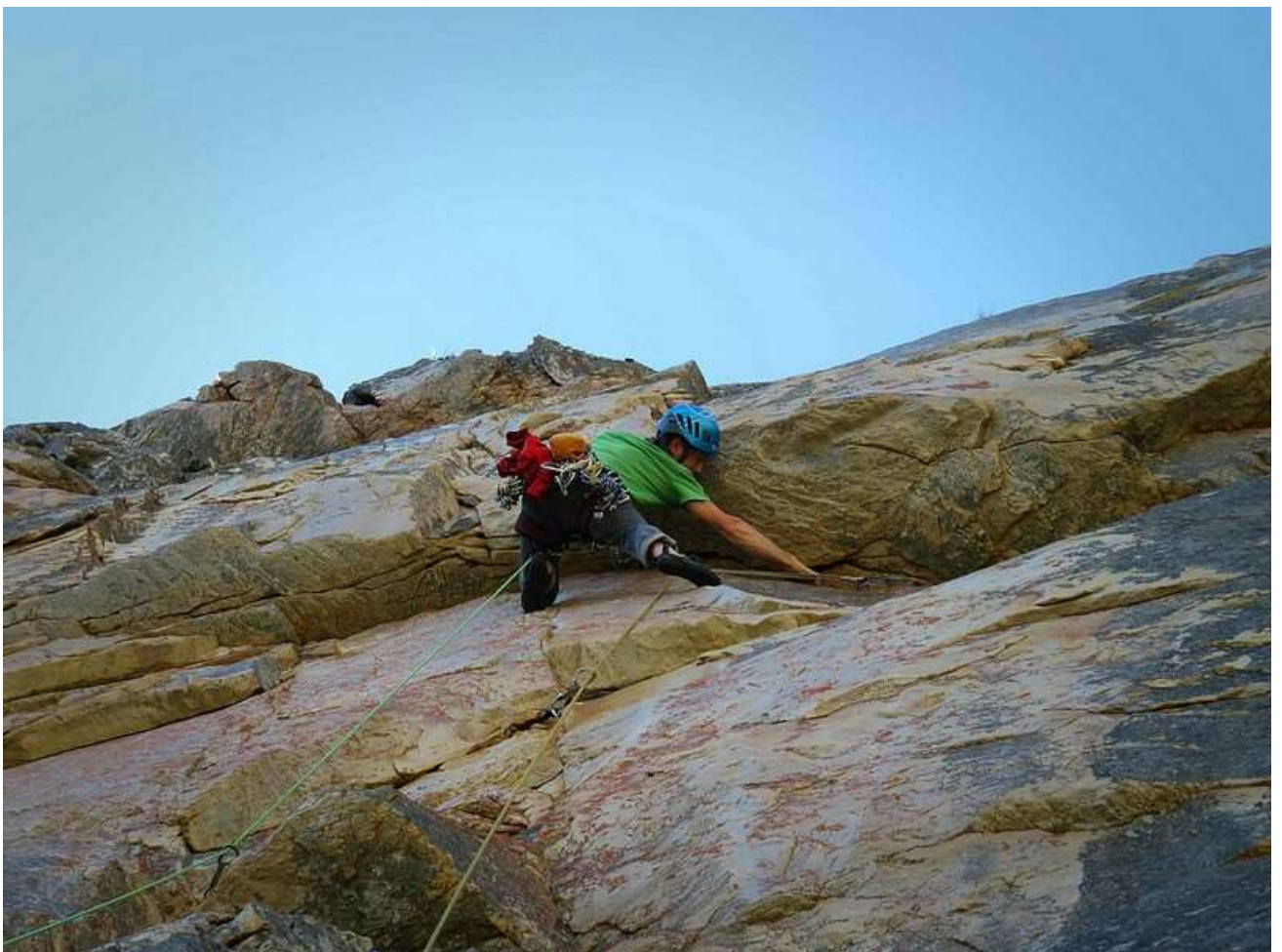
I led off above the scramble pitch shared with ***Timerity*** and ***Another Fck'n Time*** and climbed diagonally up to make a stance in a deep recess directly below the last abseil point of the ***Timerity Abseil***. Garreth then bombed through the overhangs on a mere grade 20 to stance at the bolted a stance. Jimbo then continued up for a few meters to share a small section of ***Timerity*** 3rd pitch to then climb the ramp to the left at a very moderate grade too (18) to stance at the next bolted abseil point. I then climbed up a brilliant line that I had done some time ago, to find a small ledge to stance near the bottom of the centre of the headwall proper.



***Snort climbing up the excellent 18 pitch into the middle of the headwall. Photo Garreth Bird***



Jimbo then took the sharp end and after boldly taking a whipper on the crux climbed the pitch free.







***Jimbo styling and then flying off the headwall pitch of Zeitgeist: Photos Garreth Bird***

On the 10th September, we returned and Jimbo sent the pitch totally free followed by Garreth. We were in 2 parties of two and I then had a go but could barely get the gear out before blowing my forearms. I lowered to the stance and Luke tried and took a fall but after a rest on the gear cruised through to finish the pitch. This is a remarkable feat for such a young lad on proper, run-out intimidating trad even though the gear was pre-placed. Once through the crux it is not over. There is another 3m of run out very tricky 22 climbing on thin holds with pumped forearms. I then managed to follow but I had to rest on the gear before getting through the crux.

Garreth and Jimbo sat above us on top of the ***Divine Time Buttress*** shouting encouragement and beta. We were all chuffed with our efforts.

But the matter did not end there. I spied one of the most interesting and compelling roof cracks I have seen just to the left of ***Timidity*** 5<sup>th</sup> pitch. It was time to go look at it and while Luke and I were finishing off the headwall, Garreth set off up to it. He spent almost 2 hours fighting to get through it and indeed it will go but it won't be easy. He guesses around 26. Young Luke did the honours of cleaning it which took another hour or so. Jimbo and I meanwhile abseiled to the ***Snotter Camp*** and – you guessed it – drank tea.

My son Duncan came up with a term this morning as I write this story i.e. ***Brotality***. We were sawing up massive logs in Cecilia forest and carrying them down in rucksacks weighing around 40kg this morning. What an apt name for the roof crack. It was indeed ***Time for Brotality***.

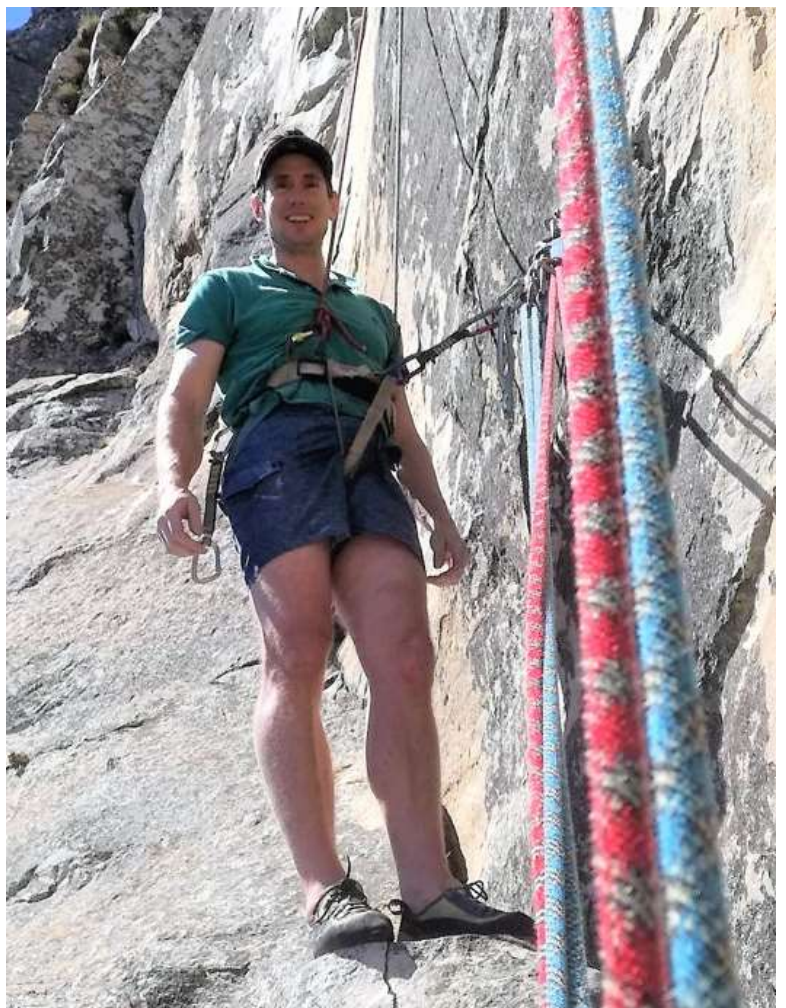






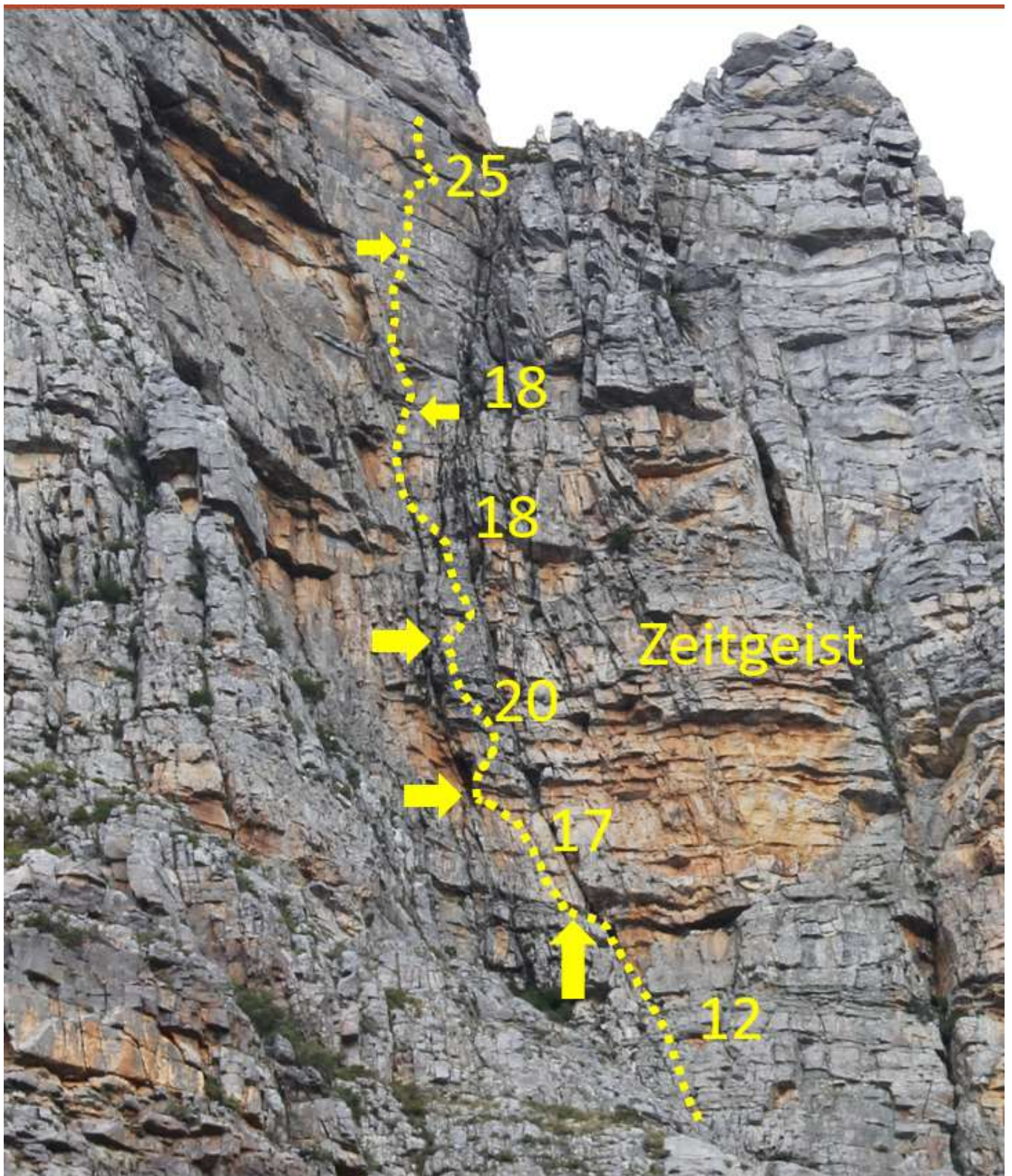
**Garreth Bird fighting his way through the stellar roof crack.** Photo: C Edelstein

All the while another kinda drama was unfolding in the hot sunshine on **Newborn** 29 where Willem Le Roux and Phlip Olivier were successfully sending the first half of that route. However, Willem had forgotten his harness and was using my arcane '70s **Whillans Sit Harness**. **Eina!!!!**



**Spot the Crotch Strap.** Photo Phlip Olivier





**Start:** Take off from the **Snotter Camp** up the easy ramp just left of the water drums and climb easily for 55m shared with **Timerity** and **Another Fck'n Time**.

**Pitch 2: 17 (25m).** Climb up steeply but easily the very hard quartzite rock and diagonal your way to stance in the obvious deep recess.

**Pitch 2: 20 (20m).** Climb up the right wall of the recess and crank on to the arete. Continue to the overhang above and move left to climb more easily to a ledge with bolted anchors on the last **Timerity Abseil**.



**Pitch 3:** 18 (50m). Climb directly up above the bolts to the overlap and crank through on the right to a large ledge. Climb the grey-black arete on the right side (in common with **Timerity**) to below the bushy gulley. Move left and climb the left leaning ramp to a large ledge. After placing a directional walk left to the abseil bolts on **Timerity**.

**Pitch 4:** 18 (22m). Climb the left leaning ramp past the overhang and then step right to attain a left leaning crack. Climb this for a metre or two and then leave the crack to climb up the face to a small standing ledge.

**Pitch 5:** 25(23m). Climb up the slightly left leaning grey break to where the rock becomes yellow and orange to an obvious under-cling. Do tricky move up and right to the overhang. Place small good cams and move left two metres. Crank the crux on thin holds and continue to a good rail. (Small cams). Finish easily to stance in the shady walk-off cave on blocks.

**Pitch 6: ???26 (40) WORK in progress. The Brotality Roof.**

Walk left about 40m and stance at the same place as **Timerity 6<sup>th</sup> pitch**. Find your way to the roof and fight your way through it with or without aid moves.

FFA: **Zeitgeist (sans Brotality Roof)**. Jimbo Smith, Garreth Bird, Luke Eberhard and C Edelstein September 2017

## TIMERITY 220m 22 \*\*\*\*\*

**Time** *noun* the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future regarded as a whole.

**Temerity** *noun* “excessive confidence or boldness; audacity. *“no one had the temerity to question his conclusions”* synonyms: audacity, boldness, audaciousness, nerve, effrontery, impudence, impertinence, cheek, barefaced cheek, gall, presumption, presumptuousness, brazenness, forwardness, front, rashness”

**Timerity** *noun*: The time spent climbing bold, audacious and nerve-wracking routes.

Start at the **Snotter Camp**.

**Pitch 1:** 55m 12. Pleasantly wander up the grey slab on clean rock avoiding vegetated parts and loose rock to a ledge system. Continue up the white rock left of chimney crack to exit on to a ledge and stance.

**Pitch 2:** 30m 19 Climb straight up a metre or two to the left of the crack and then step around right on to the face. Continue to a ledge. Climb the shiny quartzite rock to an overlap. Pull through and continue up to a decent ledge.

**Pitch 3:** 55m 19 (Probably best to stance Head up and slightly left to what seems like grotty black water streaked rock but that climbs really well on fins of rock. Diagonal up left to move left below an overhang to a ledge system. Move left 3m to a large recess. (Stance here if you are getting rope drag). Crank up the arete on the right of the recess and continue to where it becomes a chossy gully. Escape on to the clean rock on the left and crank through the overlap. Continue to and stance at the bolt belay of the 2<sup>nd</sup> **Timerity Abseil**.

**Pitch 4:** 45 22. This is a superb pitch. Climb about 10m to the first grey roof. Do a lay-back move on the right to attain the face above. Find your way tending left to bypass the next large overhang on its right. Pull through and continue a few more metres to below a small sloping ledge above you on the right. Step right 2m and then climb on to the ledge (much easier than climbing directly on to it. A stance can be made here.)

Continue up the weathered grey rock on flakes to the orange black streaked rock. Do a tricky move to a rail more or less directly above the belay. Then crank past the overlap (crux). Purist ignore the next info. There is a bomb proof green alien or equivalent placement easily placed just above you to protect this move. Then do tricky (slightly run-out) balance moves to the next overlap. Continue up the black rock to stance at the bolts of the **Timerity Abseil**.

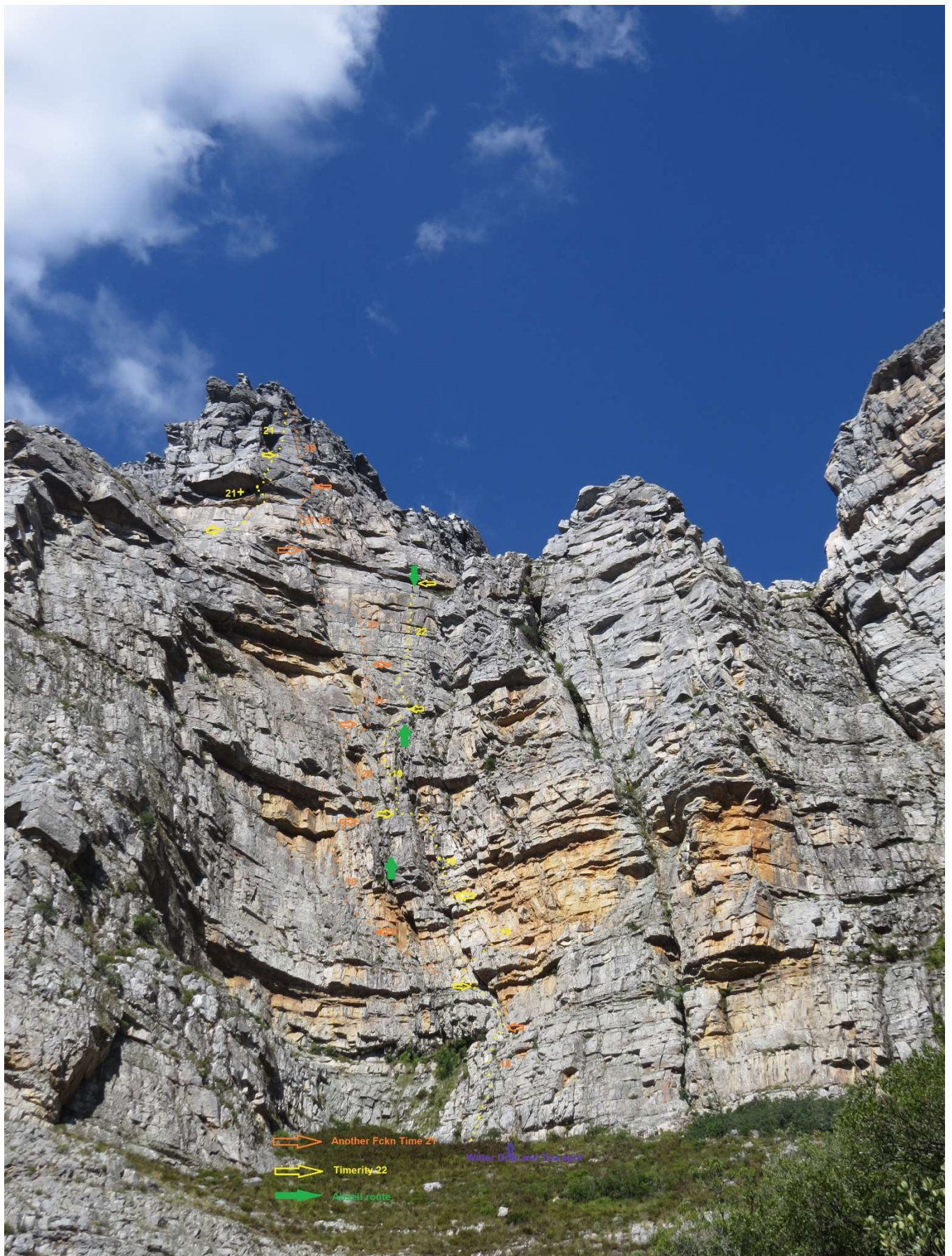
**Pitch5:** 35m 22. Walk left for about a rope length and just past the end of the “cave” what will usually be a rather sunny spot amongst the restios. Above you a **“Separate Reality”** crack that is unclimbed to date is visible above. Start below it up the obvious crack and head up right on a fairly easy ramp to a ledge. Place a high Camelot 3 or equivalent and to a strenuous crank up to find jugs on the shelf below the roof. Funky, problems solving moves to the right and then up using hand jams allow you to negotiate the right side of the overhang, further right than is obvious. Climb up more easily to a stance.

**Pitch6:** 25m 21. Climb the grey weathered jugs and high friction rock to the rail level with the overhang on the left. Secure the next slightly run-out moves with 2 bomber pieces. Do thin tricky moves and climb up to the top stance.

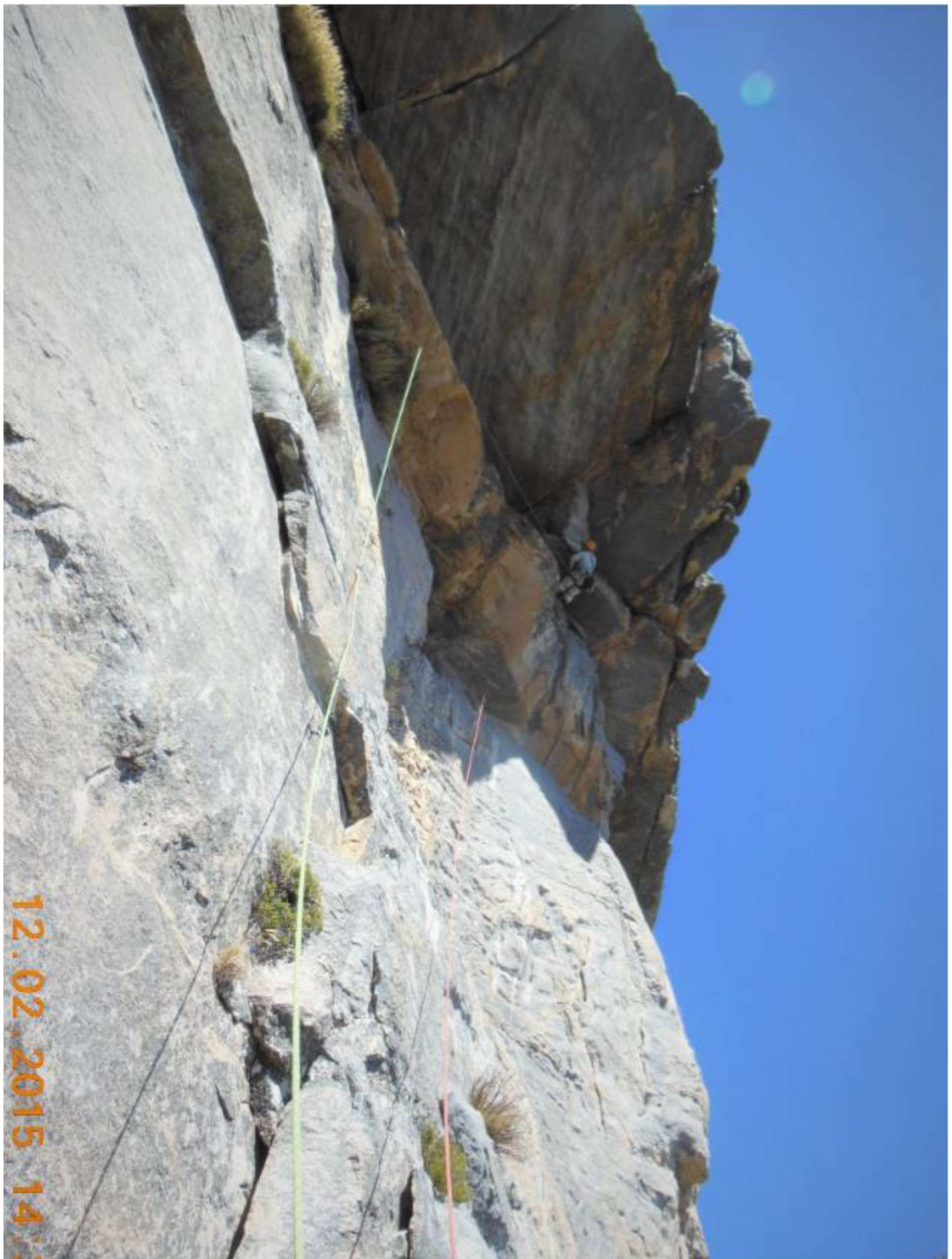
First ascent : C Edelstein and Johann Lanz 12 February 2015



**Descent:** Scramble down the gully to the right till it opens up. Keep scrambling down to the left facing out on relatively easy rock to the scree. Go down to the **Timerity abseil** I just below.







**Snort on the 6<sup>th</sup> Pitch on the first ascent of Timerity 22. Photo Johann Lanz**





***Johann Lanz on the crux of the final pitch on Timerity 21. Photo Charles Edelstein.***

**First Ascent: C Edelstein and Johann Lanz 12 February 2015**